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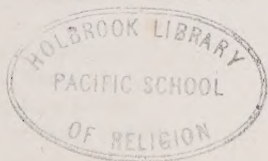
THE

EVANGELICAL PULPIT.

EDITED BY REV. LUTHER LEE, D. D.

"How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, that bring glad tidings of good things."

VOLUME III.



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THE EVANGELICAL PULPIT.

JULY 1863.

THE ONLY GOSPEL OF SALVATION.

"Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you, than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed."—GALATIANS I. 8.

Justification from sin by faith in Christ, was the Gospel which Paul had preached unto them. Another Gospel, would be any other method of salvation, than that which is by faith in Jesus Christ.

To be cursed is to be devoted to destruction.

Such strong language can be justified only upon the following ground :

1. A conviction, on the part of Paul, that he was inspired by God, beyond the possibility of being mistaken.

2. Certain knowledge, through this inspiration, that the gospel, which he preached, presented the only means and way of salvation.

The topic to be discussed, may be thus stated :

THE GOSPEL, AS A SYSTEM OF RELIGION, ALONE MEETS THE RELIGIOUS NECESSITIES OF UNIVERSAL HUMANITY.

I shall attempt to maintain this proposition, by pointing out four distinct religious necessities, on the part of humanity, to which the Gospel responds, but which no other religion meets.

I. Knowledge is man's first religious necessity, while ignorance is his birth-right, and his inheritance.

The Gospel is the only religion which meets this necessity, by pouring upon the mind of humanity, the necessary religious light.

1. Men need a knowledge of the fundamental truths, which **must** lie at the foundation of religion to render it secure.

If, as some have affirmed, the light of nature is sufficient, all men must have sufficient light.

Deny the doctrine of the fall, as all sceptics do, and there is no accounting for the general ignorance of mankind, only on the ground of the insufficiency of the light of nature.

No nation ever gained sufficient religious knowledge without the light of the Scriptures.

2. Men need certain knowledge in regard to religious character and duty.

The Gospel alone teaches clearly what we are required to be and do.

Every religion needs a standard of devotion and a ritual, to render it practical.

When you have sought the world over for a standard or measure of your duty to God, come back and read in the Gospel, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength." Mark xii. 30.

When you have searched in vain for a standard of devotion, enter a Christian temple, and see it written over the altar, "God is a spirit : and they that worship him must worship in spirit and in truth." John iv. 24.

When you have examined the rites of all other religions, became terrified by their tragedy, or disgusted with their foolish mummary and flummery, come back and witness the only Gospel rights, Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

And now, while you are at the place of worship, inquire after your duty to your fellows, and receive for an answer, "All things whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so to them."

3. Men need certain knowledge of religious sanctions, including human destiny.

A religion that regards this world only, does not meet the wants of humanity, in its deepest solicitudes.

A religion that regards a future state, without making it certain and clear, would hold the soul in a state of painful uncertainty, in proportion to the interest it might wake up.

Here the Gospel triumphs over all other religions.

Christ has "abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel."

He declared himself the source of eternal life, when he said, "I am the resurrection and the life, he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die." John xi. 25, 26.

II. A remedy for human crime and guilt is an absolute necessity on the part of men, and the Gospel alone provides this.

"All have sinned and come short of the glory of God;" all are guilty before God.

God must be immutable, and govern by immutable laws, to render humanity secure. But this leaves no hope for sinners, until a remedy for their crimes and guilt is found.

Where is that remedy?

Man cannot make atonement for his sins. Nature does not provide a remedy for sin, nor reveal where it may be found.

The Gospel clears up the subject in the light of heaven.

"God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him might not perish, but have everlasting life." John iii. 16.

"Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare in righteousness, for the remission of sins are past, through the forbearance of God, that he might be just and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus." Romans iii. 25, 26.

This is what every sinner needs, but what the Gospel alone furnishes.

III. There is an absolute necessity for moral power beyond man's natural forces, which is supplied by the Gospel only.

Humanity is in a fallen, lapsed condition, and needs to be acted upon, that it may act efficiently in the right direction.

When Paul had resolved to reform, he exclaimed: "To will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not." Romans vii. 18.

No matter how light you make the head, until you reach the heart, the stream of evil thoughts and desires will roll on.

Here all other religions fail for want of moral power.

This moral power consists of two influences.

1. The direct influence of the Holy Spirit, acting upon the heart.

2. The motive power of truth, which is the power of conscience, hope and fear.

IV. Men need consolation and support under the ills of this life, which the Gospel alone furnishes.

What can heathenism do for its votaries along the path of life?

What light and comfort can it impart in the hour of life's dark going down?

A dying Hindoo inquired of his Bramin, "What will become of me when I am dead?"

The Bramin replied, "You will go into another body."

"But what will become of me when that body dies?" was the inquiry of the dying man.

"You will go into another body," was again the Bramin's reply.

But the dying man inquired, "What will become of me last of all?"

The Bramin was silent, and the man died without the answer.

Infidelity can do no better by its votaries.

Infidels have often confessed the insufficiency of their theories.

"One thought it better to be a Christian than an infidel, because consolation upon a false ground is better than no consolation.

Hume could not give to his mother, when dying, a substitute for the Christian faith which he had subverted in her.

Here the gospel triumphs over all other religions.

Every other trust has failed in the dying hour, but Christianity never once failed in death.

No christian ever renounced his faith in his dying hour, but thousands have fled from every other dependence to the hope of the Gospel, in life's closing hour, as the only safe place to die.

Who but a Christian can shout victory as he goes down into the dark cold river of death?

The poet has well described the scenes that transpire on the shore of that dark river, as different classes come to cross that stream.

"There is a stream whose narrow tide
The known and unknown worlds divide,
Where all must go;
Its waveless waters dark and deep,
Mid sullen silence downward sweep
With ceaseless flow.

I saw, where at the dreary flood,
 A smiling infant prattling stood,
 Whose hour had come ;
 Untaught of ill it neared the tide,
 Sunk as to cradle rest, and died
 Like going home.

Followed, with languid eye, anon,
 A youth, diseased and pale and wan ;
 And there alone
 He gazed upon the leaden stream,
 And feared to plunge,—I heard a scream
 And he was gone.

And then a form in manhood's strength,
 Came bursting on, till there at length
 He saw life's bound ;
 He shrunk and raised a bitter prayer,
 Too late—his shriek of wild despair
 The waters drown'd.

Next stood upon the surgeless shore,
 A being bowed with many a score
 Of toilsome years ;
 Earth bound and sad he left the bank,
 Back turned his dimming eye and sank.
 Ah ! full of tears.

How bitter must thy waters be,
 Oh, death ! how hard a thing, ah ! me,
 It is to die !
 I mus'd—when in that stream again
 Another child of mortal man
 With smiles drew nigh.

'Tis the last pang, he calmly said,
 To me, O death, thou hast no dread ;
 Saviour I come !
 Spread but thine arm on yonder shore—
 I see ! ye waters bear me o'er—
 There is my home."

If these things be so, and they surely are, well might Paul exclaim, " Though we or an angel from heaven preach any other Gospel unto you, than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed."

REMARKS.

1. How terrible is the responsibility of such as divert attention from the way of life by preaching another Gospel ?

Such is the work of all the propagandists of fundamental error.

How many teach the most corrupt and corrupting principles and practices, for the truth of God ?

Such false guides are more destructive than was the deceptive

leader of the Norwegian band, who lead them off the rocks of death.

But they shall not escape as he did.

"Let him be accursed," is the sentence pronounced upon all such.

It would be better to be crushed beneath a falling mountain, than to fall under the weight of that sentence.

2. The vocation of the Gospel ministry is most fearful in responsibility, arduous in execution, and high and glorious in design.

The theme is God's gracious offer of salvation to lost sinners.

To mistake the gospel is to preach another gospel.

To fail to make a clear and forcible exhibition of the gospel is to fail to secure the end of our ministry.

Can any man be too well informed, and too well qualified to preach the Gospel !

If ministers will but realize that their theme is the world's redemption, and that it has been made the subject of investigation by the cloudless minds of angels ; if they will but consider that they labor to save souls, and feel the vows of God upon them, they will find but little time to dig, and none to idle away. We need to combine the stern, unyielding zeal of Paul, the dashing, fiery temper of Peter, the clear, prudent judgment of James, the tender, kind, melting love of John, the broken, weeping spirit of Jeremiah, and the evangelical visions and songs of Isaiah.

But look away to the end of a successful ministry.

"They that be wise shall shine as the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever."

3. It is proper to close with an appeal to such as are living in neglect of the Gospel of Christ, the only Gospel of salvation.

If men or angels are cursed who preach another gospel, will not those be cursed, who neglect and abuse the true Gospel when it is preached unto them ?

Fearful indeed is the work of sinners, who slight the invitations of the Gospel, and turn away from heaven's free offer of mercy.

Such a course must end in ruin.

As the Gospel reveals the only means of salvation, those who reject it must perish.

Let me urge you all to close in with the offers of salvation now ;
to-morrow may be too late.

“ To-day the Saviour calls.
Ye wanderers come ;
O ye benighted souls,
Why longer roam ?

To-day the Gospel calls ;
For refuge fly !
The storm of vengeance falls,
Ruin is nigh !

The Spirit calls to-day,
Yield to its power ;
O grieve it not away,
’Tis mercy’s hour.”

SALVATION MADE EASY.

“ That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness ; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”—ROMANS X. 9, 10.

The object of the apostle, in this text, is to show that the way of Gospel salvation is easy.

To do this he exhibits it in connection with the legal method.

The legal method turns on this rule, as stated by Moses, “ The man that doeth these things shall live by them.”

By this rule none can be saved, without living a perfect life from beginning to end.

The Gospel rule, which is the righteousness by faith, is simple and easy ; by it salvation is secured by a word, and that word is nigh every one, even in their mouth and in their heart.

It does not inquire, “ Who shall ascend into heaven to bring Christ down from above.”

Or, “ Who shall descend into the deep to bring up Christ again from the dead.”

The righteousness of faith is not so far as heaven above or the deep below.

But what saith it ? that is, what does the Gospel say of the righteousness which is by faith.

"The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth and in thy heart, that is, the word of faith which we preach."

Then follows the text, which is a statement of the easy method of availing ourselves of the saving word of faith, which is by confessing it with our mouth, and believing it in our hearts.

"That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness ; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."

Two things only are required in order to salvation, the faith of the heart, and the confession of the mouth.

From the positive declaration of Paul, these two conditions must be so explained and understood as to include all that is required in order to be saved.

Let us then examine them in the following order :

I. THE FAITH OF THE HEART REQUIRED, AND

II. THE CONFESSION OF THE MOUTH TO BE MADE.

I. THE FAITH OF THE HEART REQUIRED.

"If thou shalt believe in thine heart that God raised him (Christ) from the dead, thou shalt be saved."

1. The thing to be believed is that God raised Christ from the dead.

This fact is here put for all the fundamental doctrines of the Gospel.

It is the great central truth of Christianity, and if it be true, the whole system must be true ; to believe this, is in fact to believe the whole.

No man can believe that God raised Jesus Christ from the dead, without believing more.

In the first age of Christianity, this point doubtless presented the only contested issue.

Is it true that God raised Christ from the dead ? If so, then is he the Messiah and his Gospel is the gospel of the world's salvation.

The fact of his resurrection involves the fact of his death.

The facts that he died and was raised by God the Father, by a special miracle, involves the object of his death and resurrection.

This is stated chap. iv. 25, "Who was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification."

To believe that God raised him from the dead, is to believe that he died for our offences, as an expiation for our sins.

It is also to believe that his resurrection was a further means of securing our justification ; that is, our pardon.

The resurrection rendered his work complete, and presented him a living Saviour, to stand between us and God, as our Mediator and Intercessor.

Thus is it clear that to believe that God raised him from the dead, in the Apostle's sense, includes a belief in all the fundamental truths of the system.

2. This belief must be a work of the heart.

"If thou shalt believe in thine heart."

To believe it in the heart, is to believe it really, in full sincerity, without any hypocrisy or false pretence, or any doubt.

It also includes the engagement of the will and affections, by which life is controlled and conformed to the claims of the Gospel.

The mere belief of the head, the consent of the understanding, will not do.

Many sinners, and even devils, believe with the understanding, but it is not a belief unto righteousness, does not reform their lives.

3. This belief of the heart is sure to bring pardon, justification, acceptance with God.

"For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness."

To believe unto righteousness, is so to believe as to obtain justification, or to be accounted just or righteous before God.

This is the same as to obtain pardon, the remission of sin.

There is no other way in which a sinner can be accounted righteous before God.

This was the character of Abraham's faith.

II. THE CONFESSION OF THE MOUTH TO BE MADE.

"That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, thou shalt be saved."

1. To confess the Lord Jesus with the mouth, is to speak out what the heart believes.

The word confess has the same sense as profess, and is often so translated.

"Hast professed a good profession before many witnesses."—
1 Tim. ii, 12.

"They profess that they know God." Tit. i. 16.

The word, in the text, means an open declaration that we believe in Jesus Christ as the Saviour of sinners, and that we trust him for our own salvation.

It is to enter into covenant with him in connection with his church, and to promise to keep his faith, and to obey him as our head.

It is to make public profession of the Christian religion.

2. This confession, or profession, is sure to bring salvation, when it is honestly made.

"With the mouth confession is made unto salvation."

"Unto salvation," means that salvation is attained through this confession.

Those who thus confess Christ, God does and will save.

This is true of present salvation, as well as of eternal life in the world to come.

The same sentiment is taught by Christ.

"Whosoever shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven." Matt. x. 32.

Christ now stands before the throne, and confesses before his Father such as confess him on earth; and the Father now accepts such as he confesses, and will accept them in the day of judgment.

3. This confession is the only way to obtain salvation; without it we cannot be saved.

This remark, of course, is to be understood of such and such only, as are capable of making such confession, and as have an opportunity to make it.

That there should be no salvation without this confession is most reasonable and certain.

"Whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven." Matt. x. 33.

Not to confess Christ is to deny him, for none are or can be neutral.

Look then at the principle involved.

Christ demands this confession of all who would be saved by him.

Why then is not this confession made?

If it be for want of interest, that is of itself a crime.

If it be our deference for the false views and tastes of the world that holds us back from making this profession, the crime is still greater.

If it be our love of the approbation of those who despise religion, or our dread of their frown, the case is not improved.

If it be the fear of man, it is a violation of Christ's positive command, "Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul." Matt. x. 28.

If it be the disinclination or opposition of our own hearts, the crime is a very great one.

No reason can be rendered for not making this profession which does not involve crime.

REMARKS.

1. The faith and confession which is sure to result in salvation, supposes the previous exercise of repentance.

An impenitent sinner cannot believe in his heart unto righteousness, and his confession, should he make one, would be a lie.

The confession includes all the mental elements which the gospel requires.

"I am a great sinner ; thou, O Christ, art a great and only Saviour ; I renounce my sin ; I forsake it all, and will obey and serve thee ; Saviour, I come to thee just as I am to be saved."

This is the confession which brings salvation. It includes repentance and faith.

2. Those who make no profession of religion have none.

As a public profession of religion is so clearly required, as a means of salvation, where the profession is not made, the salvation does not exist.

3. The way of salvation is plain and easy.

Believe in thine heart, and confess with thy mouth.

It may all be done here, and just now.

Who will take the step, and now, in this place, and before God, and angels, and this assembly, confess the Lord Jesus ?

A PLEA FOR SUNDAY SCHOOLS.

"Prepare ye the way of the Lord."—MATT. III. 3.

In the order of Divine Providence, great events and great changes in this world, are preceded by appropriate means and instrumentalities.

Worldly minded politicians may scan the signs of the times, and speculate in regard to the actions and motives of those by whom reformations and revolutions are effected, but unless they see the hand of God in the government of the world, they will base their theories upon a false philosophy, and find themselves disappointed in the end.

When God gave his covenant to man, he called and prepared Abraham to receive it.

When God was about to deliver the children of Israel from Egypt, he caused Moses to be educated and prepared.

John was sent to prepare the way for Christ.

To this latter event the text relates.

"Prepare ye the way of the Lord."

The words are quoted from Isaiah, xl. 3.

"The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a high way for our God."

This prediction John applied to himself.

The figure is borrowed from the custom of Eastern Monarchs.

There must be a greater revival, and a wider extension of Christianity, than has yet transpired, to meet the various prophecies on the subject.

This we cannot expect without some preparatory measures and instrumentalities.

The end is not likely to be reached by any one class of efforts, but I have no doubt that Sunday Schools are a leading instrumentality, under God, by which the world is to be evangelized.

Let me then, in treating of Sunday Schools, as the harbinger of the world's salvation, call your attention to the subject in the following order :

I. THE ADAPTATION OF THE MEANS TO THE END.

Sunday Schools are adapted to effect the evangelization of the world, and will effect it, if properly applied and sustained.

1. Sunday Schools will remove the principal difficulties out of the way of the success of the Gospel.

Sunday Schools will make Christians in sentiment, of all who are educated in them, and grow up under their influence.

In this result, an exterminating blow will be struck at the very root of infidelity.

If every man reared in a Christian land, was a sound Christian in belief, the way would be prepared for the triumph of the Gospel.

The Gospel now has to contend with a dark cloud of ignorance, and batter against towering walls of scepticism, which will be swept away, so soon as all the children are reared in Sunday Schools.

First impressions are deep and abiding.

Let them be Christian impressions.

2. Sunday Schools will secure the means and agencies for evangelizing the world.

When every farm, store, and shop, shall be controlled by Sunday School scholars, there will be means.

Nor will there be a home destitution created by the supposed increase of liberality.

God will bless the land, and render it more fruitful, when those who cultivate it shall honor him with the first fruits of all their increase.

The system of Sunday Schools will also furnish the men and women for carrying on the work.

The Sunday School is the primary department of the great theological school of the church.

Here the first lessons in theology are given.

These lessons should be truthful, clear, instructive, interesting and impressive.

In the Sunday School the first Gospel preaching is often heard, and the first impressions made upon minds, which in after years thrill whole communities with their evangelical eloquence, and throw a sheet of light over a whole land, and perhaps over the whole face of the Christian world.

Sunday Schools, then, as a means, are adapted to the end.

3. The system of Sunday Schools possesses advantages which no other plan does, and which can be supplied by no substitute.

Family instruction does not reach every case, as all parents are

not pious, and are not equally capable of communicating religious instruction.

If children are taught at home, it will prove a great help to the Sunday School.

If children are not taught at home, the School will do what would otherwise go undone.

Public preaching does not meet the wants of the children.

Both its style and its ends are generally above the capacity of children.

4. The work aimed at in Sunday Schools is God's own measure, and is enforced by his authority.

"Thou shalt teach them diligently to thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in the house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up." Deut. vi. 7.

"Ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath; but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." Eph. vi. 6.

Proper religious instruction is the thing aimed at.

Sunday Schools secure the object of the command, by other and more efficient means than were originally employed.

They had no printed bibles then, and hence the command to talk about the commandments.

Now we put the word into the hand of every child to be read, and have an organized method of teaching its sense.

II. THE MEANS BY WHICH SUNDAY SCHOOLS MAY BE RENDERED SUCCESSFUL IN THEIR MISSION.

1. There must be a deep interest felt, and a warm zeal manifested on the part of the church.

There must be means, and men and women furnished for the work.

There must not only be teachers for the school, but Missionaries to go and hunt up the wanderers and bring them in.

In cities and large towns, this requires much effort, as well as means, to overcome the difficulties.

2. There must be a sufficient number of teachers, who will be punctual, zealous and interesting.

They must be on hand every time.

They must be on hand at the hour.

They must labor to have their minds full of the sense of the lesson.

3. Parents have an important part to act.

Unless parents manifest an interest in the school, it will be difficult to awaken an interest in the minds of the children.

Punctuality, on the part of the children, depends largely upon the parents.

If a few parents, who are irreligious, neglect or oppose their children, it will awaken sympathy, and excite increased effort, but if parents generally are indifferent, it will discourage all.

4. Every possible means must be resorted to, to interest the children.

Children cannot be benefited, to any considerable extent, without feeling a deep interest.

Parents and citizens, a great responsibility rests upon you.

You, under God, have assigned to you the work of preparing your successors, who must soon fill the places you occupy.

You virtually choose your successors.

You, in effect, decide whether those who will so soon fill your places, shall be wise or unwise, religious or irreligious, good or bad.

This is a responsibility you cannot escape if you would ; it is upon you, and you must respond to it.

Let that response be a noble one.

Children and youth, this is your seed time, the first fruits of which, if improved, you will reap in the riper years of your manhood, and the full harvest of which you will gather in the fields of eternity.

If you improve well these golden hours, the advantages will be your own, and prove a sure investment.

If you neglect the present hour, you will feel the loss, and feel it forever.

THE RADICALISM OF THE GOSPEL.

"Every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted shall be rooted up."—MATT. xv. 13.

The word here rendered plant, some render plantation.

The word will admit of either translation, and as it does not oc-

cur in any other text in the New Testament, it is not important in which sense it is understood.

If it be rendered plantation, it naturally refers to the Pharisees as a society, and the doctrine is, that the Gospel will attack and root up all combinations of errorists.

If the word be rendered plant, as in the text, it more naturally refers to the errors of the Pharisees, and the doctrine is, that the Gospel will attack and root up every error.

In which sense the text is understood is not important, as each sense involves the other. Either sense will warrant the following proposition.

THE GOSPEL IS SO RADICALLY REFORMATORY, THAT TO PREACH IT FULLY AND CLEARLY, IS TO ATTACK AND CONDEMN ALL WRONG, AND TO ASSERT AND DEFEND ALL RIGHTEOUSNESS.

The Scriptures assume upon their face, to teach what is right and what is wrong, and to command the one, and to forbid the other.

Nothing can be more radical in this world of deep-rooted error and wrong, than to insist upon all that is right, and to condemn all that is wrong.

This is the radicalism of the Gospel :—"Every plant which my Heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up."

Let us illustrate this view.

1. The Gospel asserts its radical reform position, by maintaining the two extremes of right and wrong, of sin and holiness.

The Gospel regards all men with reference to these extremes, denying all neutrality or middle ground.

"He that is not with me is against me ; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad." Matt. xii. 30.

"Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin." John viii. 34.

"He that committeth sin is of the devil."

"For whosoever keepeth the whole law, and yet offendeth in one point, is guilty of all." James ii. 10.

"Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them." Galatians iii. 10.

2. The Gospel asserts its radical reform position, by demanding absolute obedience and submission.

The Gospel never commutes with sinners ; never compromises its claims, but insists on a practical, unconditional, and entire

compliance with its claims, immediately, at all times, and under all circumstances.

This radical position of the Gospel is seen, both in its precepts, and in the examples of such as were inspired, and acted out the truth, which they were inspired to communicate to others.

By way of example, we have the offering by Abraham, of his son.

We also have the heroic conduct of Daniel, and his companions. Daniel vi. 4-23, and Chapter iii. 1-23.

The precepts of the Gospel bearing on the point are numerous and clear, and often so connected with example as to give them great force.

"But Peter and John answered and said unto them, whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we can but speak the things which we have seen and heard." Acts iv. 19, 20.

"Then Peter, and the other apostles answered and said, we ought to obey God rather than men." Acts v. 29.

In all these cases, worldly prudence would have dictated a different course, but right must be responded to, regardless of worldly considerations.

3. The power and success of the Gospel, depends upon the maintenance of its radical positions, by its ministers and friends.

This will be admitted as a general principle.

No one will deny that ministers, christians, and churches, lose their moral power when they fail to exemplify the whole Gospel.

If we abate aught from the claims of the Gospel, it ceases to be a standard, and we have no standard of truth, right and duty, which we can enforce on the ground of divine authority.

If the whole Gospel is not to be maintained, we have no rule determining how much and what part must be maintained.

It is certain the Gospel will never reform mankind, only so far as it is applied, specifically to the evils to be removed.

To root up every evil plant, the Gospel plough must be applied to them.

The Gospel will never abolish intemperance unless it is so preached as to condemn intemperance, even the very root of the evil.

The same is true of slavery and other evils.

So long as professed Christians help to make laws to sustain these evils, the Gospel will not abolish them.

The Gospel must be so preached as to come in conflict with them, to root them up ; it must turn them out of the Church before it can root them out of the world.

If a man has evil weeds in his field, will he remove them, if he turns his plow out every time he approaches one of them.

A large portion of the evils are connected with civil government, and the Gospel will never remove them, until it is so preached as to have something to do with politics.

4. The reformatory power of the Gospel is greatly increased and developed, when its radical positions are maintained in a proper manner and right spirit.

Much depends upon the manner and temper of those who undertake to enforce the Gospel.

Reformers should be reformed.

A spirit-vender or drunkard will preach temperance with poor success.

Men can do but little to overthrow slavery, while they co-operate with churches and parties that support it.

Reformers must not only be true and firm, but they must also be meek, kind, and gentle ; so much depends upon the spirit and temper in which the truth is urged upon the attention of men.

Reformers should not run into one extreme under pretense of avoiding another.

Some neglect one thing to attend to something else.

Some neglect everything else to attend to one thing.

No one branch has so much power by itself, as when all are urged together.

To promote a revival of religion, we must have the elements of a revival in our own breasts ; we must carry the fire in our own hearts.

5. The Gospel will prove an effectual reformatory power, if it be properly applied.

The individual experimenter will find its power sufficient to root out every evil from his heart, if he applies it with earnestness.

It will also cure public evils so far as it is applied.

What it cannot reform and wash out by its cleansing waters, it will burn up by its fires.

Will we now apply it to ourselves.

We have plants among us and in our own hearts, which God never planted.

Let us take hold of the Gospel plow, and turn out every evil plant.

THE LAMP OF REVELATION.

"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path."--PSAL. CXIX. 105.

A lamp is an artificial light, used only when there is a deficiency of natural light. If the sun always shone, men would not need lamps.

So if men had a sufficient degree of religious light, by nature, they would not need a special revelation from God.

For want of that natural light, men need God's word as a lamp by which to walk.

By the word of God, the Psalmist meant such revelations of his will as they then had.

That revelation has since been increased.

It may now well be said, in regard to the Scriptures, "Thy word is a lamp to my feet, and a light to my path."

The great doctrine of the text may be briefly stated in the following proposition:

MANKIND HAVE NOT, BY NATURE, A SUFFICIENT DEGREE OF RELIGIOUS LIGHT, BUT FIND THAT SUFFICIENCY OF LIGHT IN THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.

This statement contains a negative, and an affirmative proposition.

I. Negatively, men have not, by nature, a sufficient degree of religious light.

1. The religious history of the world proves this position.

The path of humanity has been dark and devious in all ages and countries, where the light of revelation has not shone.

All have wandered, but none have found the path of virtue and happiness during a search of six thousand years.

No nation ever found the land of its own abiding prosperity.

No nation ever found the solid ground on which to lay the foundation of its own perpetual existence.

No nation ever found the hill upon which to build the temple of its own ever-enduring fame.

The only reason for these failures is found in the fact that they have pursued the search without taking God's word with them as a lamp to their feet, and a light to their path.

Look at the actual condition of those nations who have not the light of God's word.

2. An appeal to our own experience will impress us with the fact of our want of natural light.

How often have we felt the need of light which did not gleam from any point in nature?

The mind was dark within, and the world was dark without.

If we have felt this in the land of vision, with the Bible in our hands, what would be our condition if this lamp was blown out?

The only reliable light we have is the word of God, the Scriptures.

3. Particular attention to the expressive language of the text, will impress us still more deeply with a sense of our own darkness, without the light of God's word.

"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light to my path."

This language implies darkness, a want of natural light.

Life is contemplated as a journey along a meandering way, upon which the cloud of night hangs.

As is the necessity of such an one for a lamp, so is the necessity of every traveller in life's journey for the word of God.

"*A lamp to my feet.*"—The lamp enables one to see where to place every footstep.

The Bible throws its light upon the particulars of life, and every act should be determined by its light.

"*A light to my path.*"—This enables one to keep on the right direction.

It not only shows where each step should be placed, but shines upon the path in its extent, and shows its general direction and where it ends.

Without this light, all is darkness beyond life's narrow bounds.

II. Affirmatively, men find their sufficient light in the Scriptures, and there alone.

This fact must be plain to the honest and faithful student of the sacred volume.

1. Let us appeal to a comparison between those nations which have, and those which have not the Scriptures.

The difference is so great and uniform as to leave no room to doubt.

The fact that evil exists, that evil is found where the Scriptures are known, only proves that men do not abide their teaching.

The nations are uniformly most elevated in intelligence and morals, where the Scriptures are most read and the highest prized.

Those nations where the Scriptures are at all known and acknowledged, are superior to all those nations where the Scriptures are not known.

Go to Lapland on the North, and to Patagonia on the South, and to the tropic isles in the centre, and it is all the same.

2. Let us appeal to experimental facts in the life of every devoted christian.

An infidel cannot testify against the Scriptures, because he has not tried and tested them.

A practical christian knows, and he uniformly says, the Scriptures, are a lamp to his feet, and a light to his path.

The converted infidel says,

“Darkness and doubt are now flying away,
No longer I roam in conjecture forlorn,
So breaks on the traveller faint and astray,
The bright and the balmy effulgence of morn.”

A christian never grew better or happy when he abandoned christianity, and embraced infidelity.

The testimony of a christian is, “One thing I know, whereas once I was blind now I see.”

He may be an unlearned man, but he knows what he sees and feels as well as a philosopher.

He affirms that the Scriptures are a lamp to his feet.

That they shed light upon his path of duty, and hope upon his future prospects.

In them he finds a light of joy which he never found in the world.

The christian often feels that his light is not perfected, but it is not because the Scriptures are an imperfect lamp.

He only complains of his own mental and moral vision.

He is satisfied with the light as far as it goes, and feels that it will increase as he proceeds, until he shall walk amid the lamps of heaven.

The testimony of the dying christian is equally conclusive.

It is usually an honest hour with men when they are conscious that they are dying.

Those who have trusted to other lights than the Scriptures, have found their lamps going out amid the damps of death.

A christian's light never failed him then.

Infidel Hobs, when dying, said, "I am about to take a leap into the dark."

Wesley said, "The best of all is, God is with us."

REMARKS.

1. How fearful is the work of infidelity, which labors to put out this lamp, which alone can guide us through the vale of life. Could it succeed, it would throw the world back into primeval darkness.

2. How corrupt and corrupting must every system be, political or religious, which withholds the Scriptures from the people.

Popery does this ; it dares not trust the common people with the Scriptures.

Slavery withholds the Scriptures from its oppressed millions.

3. We should feel a warm zeal in the cause of the Bible, to extend its circulation.

It is a lamp to shine upon every man's path.

It should be everywhere installed as the supreme law.

If all men lived by the rules of the Gospel, what a paradise would earth become.

THE ELEMENTS OF EFFECTUAL PRAYER.

"The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."—James v. 16.

The Scriptures assign to prayer an important place in the economy of salvation, and among means which we are to use in our efforts to secure eternal life.

- A sinner may pray for himself as did the publican, "God be merciful to me a sinner."

But the text speaks of praying for others, and thus to intercede with God, we must be righteous.

It is the prayer of the righteous man that availeth much, "God heareth not sinners." David said, "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me."

The text suggests two leading thoughts.

I. THE ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF EFFECTUAL PRAYER.

1. Prayer to prevail must be the earnest language of the heart. There must be a fervent desire for the thing prayed for.

If we pray for a blessing upon our own souls, we must feel our need, a sense of the plague of sin to be removed, or an emptiness to be filled.

If we pray for others, we must feel a strong desire for their salvation.

If we pray for the salvation of the world, we must desire, yea, pant for earth's redemption from sin.

It is the desire and not the form of prayer, composed of fine words, that constitutes the power of our supplication.

It will increase the power of prayer to have the mind concentrated on some one, or some few objects.

He who prays for everything in general, is not likely to pray for anything in particular.

2. Prayer must be offered in the spirit of submission to God, to his will and government.

Our desire must be so chastened by submission, as not to grow impatient at delay.

As not to murmur at disappointment.

As not to distrust the faithfulness of God if the blessing be withheld.

3. Prayer must be offered in the spirit of absolute dependence upon God.

No other trust must intrude, no merit of our own; we must not look for the blessing as half merited, and half of grace.

We must feel that we have no other source of relief.

We must realize that, though we are to exert ourselves to secure the end, it is impossible without the blessing of God.

4. Prayer must be essentially benevolent, in its promptings and ends.

We must not pray for blessings from selfish feelings.

The leading object must not be to promote selfish ends.

We must not pray for blessings to consume upon our lusts, or our pride.

The glory of God, and the good of man must be the great end.

5. Prayer must be associated with all proper efforts to secure the end prayed for.

If we pray for temporal mercies, we must use industry and economy.

If we pray for relief for the poor, we must relieve them as we have opportunity and means.

If we pray for a revival of the work of God in our community, we must use all other means within our reach to promote a revival.

If we pray for salvation from sin, we must watch against sin, and forsake it at every point.

6. Faith is an essential element of effectual prayer.

Faith is not only belief, but trust in God also.

Abraham believed God, and also trusted in him.

Jacob wrestled in faith and prevailed.

Daniel and his companions trusted in God and were delivered.

The centurion said, "Speak but the word and my servant shall be healed."

The woman said, "If I may but touch the hem of his garment, I shall be healed."

Such is the faith which renders prayer effectual.

Prayers thus offered to God avail much.

II. THE POWER OF PRAYER WITH GOD, TO PROCURE THE THINGS PRAYED FOR.

Two preliminary remarks are necessary to prepare the way.

1. If we do not obtain the thing prayed for, it does not necessarily prove that we are not righteous, nor yet that the prayer was not offered in faith.

It may not be for God's glory, and the universal good, that the prayer should be answered at the time and in the manner contemplated.

2. Prayer may be answered, and not at the time, and in the manner contemplated.

God may respond to the desire, in substance, and yet not to our manner of expecting it.

God may see it best to send the blessing in disguise.

We are now prepared to look at the power of prayer to secure the things prayed for.

1. The power of prayer appears from the express declarations of God's word.

"It shall come to pass, that before they call I will answer, and while they are yet speaking I will hear." Isa. lxv. 24.

"They shall call on my name and I will hear them." Zeck. xiii. 9.

"Ask and it shall be given you ; seek and ye shall find ; knock and it shall be opened unto you." "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him." Luke xi. 9-13.

"Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son." John xiv. 13.

"If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will and it shall be done unto you." John xv. 7.

"Veril, yverily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. Hitherto ye have asked nothing in my name, ask and receive that your joy may be full." John xvi. 23, 24.

2. The Scriptures furnish many convincing examples of the power of prayer.

Elijah is presented as one example.

Daniel is another example.

Peter in prison with the church praying for him, is a striking case.

Paul and Silas in the Philippian prison is a clear case. Acts xii. 5-7.

It may be said these cases were all miracles, for which we are not to look.

But God can answer prayers without a miracle.

God could as easily send the jailer with the key, to open the door, as an angel, in which case it would not be called a miracle.

3. The experience of every practical christian, is in himself, a living proof of the power of prayer.

THE WORK OF GOD IN US.

“Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.”—PHIL. I. 6.

By the good work here declared to be begun, we must understand the work of salvation. They had been degraded vile heathen, and had been called to the enjoyment of Gospel salvation. In regard to this work it may be observed,

I. God is its author, he had begun it. Sinners are never first in the work, but God always begins it.

1. This is the uniform testimony of the Scriptures.

2. Universal christian experience confirms it.

II. Salvation is an internal heart work. It does not consist of any external changes and forms.

The work was begun in them, “Hath begun a good work *in you*,” not for you or about you.

The work will show itself in external fruits, but the real work is in the heart.

III. This good work is progressive. It was begun, not finished. “Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.” “Let us go on unto perfection.”

IV. This good work will be finished on the part of God. He “will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.” Margin, *finish*. It expresses an assurance that God will not fail. We have to work our salvation out while God works within us. Phil. ii. 12. It is undeniable that human agency or our co-operation is essential, hence, it is a promise that God will carry forward his own work in us to completion, if we are faithful to the grace given. It secures all needed help, in all temptations, trials and difficulties, in life and in death.

The day of Jesus Christ, denotes the time when he will come to raise the dead, judge the world, and close his mediatorial work, when salvation will be finished.

REMARKS.

1. Is this work begun in you? Is it progressing?

2. Will you, sinner, in whom this work is not begun, now cease to resist God’s Spirit and truth, and let him work in you? Yield at once and be saved.

MISCELLANEOUS DEPARTMENT.

THE EVANGELICAL PULPIT TO ITS PATRONS AND READERS.

"How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things." We are glad to be able again to preach to many through the pages of the EVANGELICAL PULPIT, who may never see our face, or otherwise hear our voice. As it does our heart good to communicate the truth, so we trust it will do you good to receive the truth, and hope we may make our monthly visits welcome and profitable. May the EVANGELICAL PULPIT be to its patrons and readers, as the herald of salvation, seen in the Prophet's vision, on the distant hill, coming with "the Gospel of Peace," to publish "glad tidings of good things." No effort on the part of the Editor shall be wanting to render it all that, in the circumstances, it can be expected to be. It shall be Evangelical, it shall speak the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so far as we shall be enabled to discriminate between truth and error.

We have no disposition to disguise the fact that we design the Pulpit shall be made a special aid to ministers. We do not undervalue their abilities, when we assume that they need aid; we have felt the want of aid ourself, and even of such aid as we may now be capable of rendering to others. We feel the need of aid still, and shall need aid in our editorial work, and hope our pages will be enriched by other and able pens. But in conducting the Pulpit, special attention shall be given to the work of practically assisting ministers in their responsible labors. In every number we will send our readers several sketches and plans of sermons, which may help the young minister in his preparation for the pulpit, as well as serve as models, after which other useful discourses can be planned. Any capable mind can make such a work useful, without being a mere copyist. Fully written sermons will seldom appear, and long ones never. In addition to the sketches and plans of sermons, which each number will contain, there shall

be other interesting and useful matter for the special benefit of ministers.

But while the EVANGELICAL PULPIT is designed for the special benefit of ministers, it will also be well adapted to interest and profit christian readers generally. The day has passed, never to return, when ministers had all the work to do, and enjoyed a monopoly of doing good. Every layman should be capable of preaching in his own sphere, while the Sunday Schools and other benevolent enterprises, open a wide field of labor for christian men and women. The Pulpit shall be rendered a help to all these christian laborers.

Forty years of active labor have not only given the Editor some experience, and stored his mind with some knowledge, which may be made useful to others, but they have left upon him visible and sensible proofs that he has but few years to labor, compared with those which have already been occupied in the field. The frosts of life's autumn are upon him, but he can yet preach and write, and speaking in his pulpit of wood, and through his Pulpit of paper, to many whom his voice cannot reach, he hopes to increase his means of doing good during the few years of labor that remain to him.

The EVANGELICAL PULPIT was commenced in 1854, and two volumes were issued. In closing the second volume, the Editor remarked, "The future engagements of the Editor render it impossible for him to edit another volume, and the work is discontinued at this point. If circumstances hereafter shall justify the undertaking, it may be resumed, but that cannot be now pledged." We are gratified that the time has come for its resumption, and hope it will meet with the same welcome that was given to the former volumes.

LUTHER LEE.

MANNER IN THE PULPIT.

That the minds of many hearers are affected by the manner of a preacher, for good or evil, cannot be denied; hence, it is important to exhibit that manner which will produce the best impression; by which, manner will be pressed into the service of

truth, to deepen its impression. A perfect manner may be attainable by but few, yet there are some common errors which all may avoid, if they will.

A common fault with some preachers, is to be always making apologies in the pulpit. They are embarrassed, or they have not had opportunity to prepare, or they have a cold and are hoarse, or some other person present ought to have preached, who might better entertain the congregation. While circumstances may justify apologies, as a rule, they had better be omitted ; the time occupied with them is worse than lost.

Always appear easy and natural in the pulpit, neither stiff nor rude, but calm and solemn. Too light an air which borders on levity, and an affected, stiff and forced solemnity, are both unfavorable for the best effect of a sermon.

Every part of the exercise should be commenced with a tone of voice sufficiently full to be heard in the most distant part of the house. It is unpardonable for a preacher to give out his hymns, read the Scriptures, begin his prayer, or give out his text, in so low a tone as not to be heard by the more distant parts of his congregation. When men have to make an effort to hear, the hearer soon becomes tired, and the preacher loses his attention.

It is unfortunate for a preacher, at every turn in his discourse, to tell his hearers how much more he might say on each part, if time would permit. Such remarks indicate that he has been unskillful in the preparation and arrangement of his sermon, and has included more than is reasonable to deliver in one discourse. Let the preacher glide easily from part to part of his subject, holding attention to what he does say, and his hearers will not think of what he does not say, unless he calls their attention to it by telling them how much he omits for want of time. If he does this, they may leave him, and wander in their minds after what he has omitted.

Do not be advertising the congregation that you will soon close, and then hold on, until you feel it necessary to ask for a continuation of their patience, with a promise to close very soon, and still continue to branch out. A better way is to keep control of yourself and subject, and fix your mind on the closing point and moment, and press forward to them, throwing out what you have not time to discuss, making your progress so smooth and rapid

that the hearer does not see or think of what you omit ; then will what you say leave a deeper impression on his mind.

Never preach long sermons, but condense and press the essential truths into a small compass. Intelligent hearers seldom complain of short sermons, but they often complain that a sermon is too long, too diffusive, too wordy, and wanting in point. There are a few men who can emit any amount of continuous sound, without appearing to exhaust themselves, but such are few. Earnest effective preachers usually feel exhausted after delivering a sermon, and must find it very economical to condense their sermons, by omitting all that does not materially contribute to the impression designed, and then spend their energy on what remains, sending home the concentrated truth by an earnest delivery.

BE STUDIOUS.

Every minister of the Gospel should be a student. For a minister not to be studious is to be recreant to his high trust. Men sometimes succeed, in some matters, by accident, but the rule is, that those who study well their business, succeed, and those who do not, fail. The agriculturist does not succeed by force of muscle alone, but has to study, experiment, and learn. The physician needs to study, not only to store his mind with a general knowledge of his profession for ready use, when needed, but needs to study each difficult case by itself as it occurs. So with the attorney and advocate, he must study to obtain a general knowledge of law, and must likewise study each case in particular, before bringing it into court.

Will it then be said that ministers constitute an exception to the general rule, and that they have no need to study, and that the necessity for study can arise only from a natural adaptation for the work of the ministry? It is admitted that some men appear to have a natural gift for preaching, and it would be well if such only entered the ministry, but still no natural gift can render study unnecessary. It is said that the Gospel is plain, and so it

is in some aspects, yet it is not plain in any sense which renders instruction unnecessary, or which renders study unnecessary to constitute a successful religious teacher. While the Gospel is plain, so far as to render it available to the simple for their personal salvation, it is deep and profound, so much so, that angels desire to look into it, and as to require the light and experience of eternity to enable the most powerful human mind to comprehend it in the fullness of its wisdom, grace and glory.

It would probably be lost labor to appeal to the experience of ministers, who judge study unnecessary, for they are not likely to feel the want of knowledge, but an appeal to students will be felt and responded to by increased efforts. After long years of hard study and labored application in the work of the ministry, every student feels that his measure of intelligence is not full, and that there are yet untold treasures of knowledge for him in the open fields of future study.

Ministers should study to store their minds with useful knowledge, that they may have a mental fund to draw upon on every occasion of need ; and yet they should not, in their pulpit efforts, rely wholly upon their general knowledge, but should study each sermon, and prepare for each occasion in particular, as they have opportunity. A minister need never lose the interest of novelty in matter with the same congregation, if he will apply himself. The Scriptures contain inexhaustible treasures of knowledge, and the more we study them, the more we desire to study ; and the better we understand them, the more ardent becomes our desire for a still better understanding of them ; and the more deeply a minister drinks of their fountain, the more devout, heavenly minded, and useful does he become. It may be added, that the minister who does not study, who does not even love to study, ought to suspect himself of a want of a proper appreciation of his high mission, and of the important and difficult work in which he is engaged. Each should study to show himself "approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."

LOOK AFTER THE CHILDREN.—A minister should pay proper attention to the children of his charge, and so manage as to secure their good will. In earlier times ministers were a terror to chil-

dren, insomuch that the little ones would run and hide when they saw the minister coming. This probably resulted from too stern a manner, and from a want of familiarity. Children should not only be noticed, but should be so treated by the minister as to impress their minds with his tender regard for them, and to make his interviews with them a pleasure. If this be the case, the little ones will greet his visits with the most hearty welcome. We have seen a whole group of children gathered at their play, bound with joy to meet their minister when they saw him coming. This is as it should be ; we can do them no good, only so far as we can win their confidence and make our presence and conversation a pleasure to them.

HEALTH.—Health is essential to the enjoyment of every material blessing, and equally so to efficiency in every useful enterprise ; and yet how little effort is made to secure it, and how often are its laws violated. If all were to be temperate, take but a simple diet, breathe fresh air, and drink pure water, and perform reasonable labor, thousands would be healthy and happy, who live wretched lives, and waste with disease.

SELECTING TEXTS.—As a rule, preach from plain texts, the sense of which will be understood by common sense hearers, without learned criticisms to bring out what is obscure. You will find it an advantage to preach from those texts which strike you most forcibly, and open most clearly to your mind, in your devotional reading either in family worship, or private reading and prayer.

THE PRESENT NUMBER.—This number is entirely original, as we have no correspondents, and have used no helps in making up its contents. We shall be glad to avail ourself of the help of other and able pens in any of the departments of the Pulpit, but especially in the department of Sketches and Plans of Sermons.

KEEP THE OBJECT IN VIEW.—A preacher, in the pulpit, should keep God, his glory, and the salvation of his hearers present to his mind, as the authority with which he speaks, and end for which he speaks.

LABOR.—Labor is no disgrace, but an honor. Labor preserves from vice and poverty. The rich even have their wealth from the results of labor, and will they say, that is disgraceful which has produced all their wealth?

THE GOSPEL INVITATION.

"In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, If any man thirst let him come unto me and drink."—JOHN VII. 37.

The feast of tabernacles is here referred to.

It was instituted in memory of their sojourn in the wilderness.

It lasted eight days ; seven days they dwelt in booths, made of branches of trees, but on the eighth day they came into the temple with peculiar solemnities.

On this last day, it is said that they brought water from the pool of Siloam, of which the people drank, and poured the remainder around the altar, in the court of the temple.

As this was performed, they cried, in the language of the prophet, "With joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation." Isa. xii. 3. .

The water doubtless was regarded as emblematic of the blessings which they expected to enjoy under Messiah's reign.

It furnished Christ with an occasion to present himself as the substance of all types and ceremonies, and the fountain of all grace.

As they were drinking of the water, and pouring it round the altar, Jesus stood and cried, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink."

LET US CONTEMPLATE THESE WORDS AS CHRIST'S GRACIOUS OFFER OF SALVATION TO SINNERS.

The text is an epitome of the whole Gospel, and coming from the Saviour's lips on such an interesting occasion, it must have a peculiar charm for a sinner's ear.

1. The invitation is to the thirsty, the distressed and famishing.

Men are more accustomed to invite the rich and the full ; but Christ invites the poor and needy.

This need is represented by the expressive figure of thirst.

Thirst for the pardon of sin. Guilt is the fever of the soul.

Thirst for peace with God, and peace of mind.

Thirst for happiness—for something that will satisfy the craving of an immortal mind.

This is found only in the favor and communion of God.

Thirst for higher hopes and a higher life than are enjoyed in earth's shady land.

A blissful immortality in prospect, alone can relieve the thirst of the soul.

We cannot properly appreciate the figure in a land of showers, and springs, and brooks, and rivers, like this land.

Fancy yourself upon an eastern desert, beneath an eastern sky, where the heavens withhold rain for half the year, and where there are neither springs nor running streams, and think how the cry would sound, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink."

2. The invitation is general, to all.

"If any man thirst, let him come."

Any man. Any rich man, or poor man.

Any wise man, or any unlearned man.

Any high man, or any low man.

Any white man, or any colored man.

Any bond man, or any free man.

"If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink."

3. The occasion of this invitation was most appropriate, and must have rendered it impressive.

It was at a feast of great importance.

It was on the last great day of the feast.

It was just as they were pouring out the water around the altar.

As the symbolical waters licked up the dust, and cooled and purified the air, representing the influence of the expected Messiah, that Messiah stood in the midst and called attention to himself.

4. The invitation was earnest and impressive in its manner.

Jesus *stood* and cried.

It was customary to sit while teaching, but now he was too much in earnest, and too much moved to sit.

He probably mounted upon some stand or eminence, that he might be seen, as his voice rolled over the dense throng.

Jesus *cried*, that is, spake loud, he was so much in earnest.

The word, *cried*, signifies to speak loud, to the extent of the power of the voice.

It denotes vehemence of speech.

5. The invitation is absolutely free.

"Come unto me and drink."

"Come," not go away, you will wander creation over in vain.

Go not to the world, it is empty.

Go not to Sinai, it burns with vengeance.

Go not to the ceremonial law, it is powerless to save; and the power it had was borrowed from me, and it is withdrawn at my coming.

"Come to *me*," to whom else should a sinner come?

Come to me, for I have come that you might have life, and that ye might have it more abundantly.

Come to me, for I have life in myself.

Come to me, for it has pleased the Father that in me all fullness should dwell.

"In search of empty joys below,
Ye toil with unavailing strife;
Whither, ah! whither would ye go?
I have the words of endless life."

"Come unto me and *drink*." You must drink for yourselves.

Drink pardon, and drink it freely.

Drink peace, and drink it deeply.

Drink joy, and drink it fully.

Drink life itself, and drink it eternally.

REMARKS.

1. The perverseness and hardness of the Jews was truly wonderful.

In the light of all the prophesies, and in the face of all his wonderful works, they rejected him.

It requires some knowledge of human nature, and some understanding of the circumstances of the case, to believe the naked truth, that they rejected and crucified their own expected Saviour.

But if we will look into our own hearts, and consider the influences which lead us to reject Christ, we shall find a solution of the problem of their conduct.

Ignorance and selfishness are sufficient to account for the whole.

They perverted the prophesies in their ignorance.

The Saviour's character and teachings conflicted with their positions and interests.

2. Ruin followed their rejection of the Saviour, and it will no less certainly come upon all who now reject him.

They had their day of grace, and we have ours.

They filled their measure of guilt and perished, and we shall fill ours if we persist in sin.

How long sinner will you reject Christ?

Let me urge you to come to him without delay.

A RELIGIOUS CHOICE.

"Choose you this day whom ye will serve."—JOSHUA XXIV. 15.

Joshua was an old man, and about to die and he gathered to his fathers.

Before leaving his people, he assembled all the tribes of Israel, and delivered to them a farewell address.

In this address, he labored to commit them, then and there, to the service of God.

Knowing how fickle they were, he pressed them to make an immediate choice of the course they would pursue.

He wished to have the covenant made and sealed while he was yet with them.

"Choose you this day whom you will serve."

I. WHAT IS IMPLIED IN A RELIGIOUS CHOICE?

1. Choice supposes freedom of the will.

That which is necessary, is not choice.

Nothing is choice, which is not free.

2. A choice supposes two or more objects presented to the mind.

Joshua called upon them to choose whom they would serve, the true God, or false Gods.

Every person makes this choice in effect.

God claims our service on one hand, and Satan, sin and the world on the other.

We have to choose between them.

3. A choice implies an actual preference of the heart for one object above another.

This is the state of every mind who hears me deliver this discourse ; you prefer God and truth and duty, or you prefer sin in some of its forms.

II. THE REASONS FOR CHOOSING THE SERVICE OF GOD.

1. God only has a rightful claim on us for service.

God created us, sustains us, and has redeemed us, and consequently has a claim on all our powers.

2. God only has ability to defend, protect, supply and sustain us in his service.

He is Almighty, and can rule or crush all other beings.

God can defend against Satan, but Satan cannot defend against God.

God can save us from sin, but sin cannot save us from God.

God can save us from this world, but this world cannot save us from God, or the ruin which we must share with the world, if we cling to it.

3. God only has the disposition to render us blessed and happy in return for our service.

Others may desire our service for their own benefit, but God demands it for our good.

Satan seeks our service that he may ruin us, but to do us good he has no power.

If we serve ourselves, we do it to our own damage, and lose all things ; but if we serve God, we secure all that can do us good in this life, and eternal life in the world to come.

Who would not then choose the service of God ?

III. THE IMPORTANCE OF MAKING THIS CHOICE IMMEDIATELY.

1. There being no neutrality, all stand committed on the wrong side, until they choose the service of God.

This is a fearful position to occupy, and the sooner it is abandoned the better.

Will you, dare you stand before God and angels, and the world around you, committed against God ?

2. The act of choosing the service of God, is the first step that sinners can take towards their own salvation.

Nothing can be done effectually, by God or man, or the sinner himself, until he chooses to serve God.

It is the first act of the sinner in arrest of his own ruin.

3. The longer sinners put off making this choice, the less inclined are they to make it.

Truth often heard and disregarded loses its power over them.

The influence of the Spirit is grieved away.

The moral sense is blunted, and the conscience is less sensitive.

All the influences that draw men from sin to God, exert less and less power over the mind, as a revolving planet, describing a wider and wider circle around its center, feels less and less the power of centripetal attraction.

4. The present may be the last opportunity to make this choice.

You have seen your friends die, and some of them have died as unexpectedly as you would, should you die in a few weeks.

Some have died younger than many of you.

Some of you, no doubt, have much less time to live than you have already lived without making this choice.

“My days, my weeks, my months, my years,
Fly rapid as the rolling spheres
Around the steady pole.
The grave is near the cradle scene,
So swift the moments pass between,
And whisper as they fly,
Unthinking man remember this,
Thou midst thy sublunary bliss
Must groan, and gasp, and die.”

Will you now make the proper choice ?

That choice on your part is all that is wanting to secure your salvation.

God has chosen, Christ has chosen, the Holy Spirit has chosen, Angels have chosen, and wait to rejoice over you on your making this choice.

Come sinner, be persuaded to give your heart to God.

JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH.

“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.”—ROMANS V. 1.

The Scriptures most clearly teach that man is a fallen and depraved being.

We also have fearful practical proof of the same fact, in the moral disorders of human society.

From domestic rebellions and unhappy strifes, too often witnessed in family circles, up to the wrath of nations, dashing upon each other with a fury which stains the earth with blood, and strews it with human bones, we see evidence of human depravity.

“All have sinned and come short of the glory of God,” and all need pardon ; all need salvation.

But how guilty sinners can be restored, and enjoy peace with God, and their own consciences, the Gospel alone reveals.

This subject the apostle discusses in the two preceding chap-

ters, and the text is the conclusion drawn from the facts and arguments there stated.

“Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

In discussing the subject, I will inquire,

I. WHAT IS JUSTIFICATION?

1. Justification is a state of freedom from guilt and condemnation.

It stands opposed to a state of guilt and condemnation, in which all sinners are involved, prior to justification.

2. Justification is effected by an act of pardon, on the part of God.

As all have sinned, all need pardon.

Pardon is the only relief for guilt.

It is an instantaneous work; it does not take God a year, or month, or even a day to pardon a sinner.

Justification, when it takes place, is from all past sins, and is entire.

3. Justification is distinguished from regeneration, which is a concomitant work.

Justification is a work done for us, but regeneration is more, it is a work done in us.

Justification changes our relations, but regeneration changes our moral character.

II. THE CONDITION OF JUSTIFICATION.

Faith is the only condition of justification.

This raises the question, what is faith?

1. Faith is a belief in the Gospel, as true, and as God's plan for saving men.

This belief, to be saving, must include the consent of the will and affections to the plan, as wise and benevolent.

2. Faith, to be saving in its influence, must have trust added to belief.

Abstract belief will not save, but trust, added to belief, will save.

“The devils believe and tremble.” Jas. ii. 19.

Many sinners who believe the Gospel to be true, are not saved by it.

This trust supposes a knowledge of guilt, a conviction of sin.

Also, it supposes repentance, which includes a purpose of amendment.

3. God justifies us by accepting of our faith in Christ, in the place of the obedience which the law claims, and which we have failed to render.

"Abraham believed God and it was counted to him for righteousness." Rom. iv. 3.

"For we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness." Verse 9.

"Abraham believed God and it was imputed to him for righteousness." James ii. 23.

Faith was counted, reckoned, and imputed for righteousness.

The sense is the same in each case, as the same word is used in the original.

By righteousness, obedience to the law is meant.

God reckoned faith for this righteousness, that is, in place of it, as a substitute.

Faith is the condition of justification, while the merits of Christ is the ground.

Faith alone is the condition, works forming no part of it.

(1.) This is expressly taught in the Scriptures.

"Therefore by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified in his sight." Rom. iii. 20.

"Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law." Verse 28.

"But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted to him for righteousness." Rom. iv. 5.

Him that worketh not, as a means of justification, is the sense.

(2.) Justification is from past sin, which is impossible by works in whole or in part.

No man can work in past time, and work in present time, cannot offset against the sins committed in past time. We can only do to-day, the work which to-day demands; we cannot do the work of yesterday.

(3.) Justification by works, would not be available in some circumstances, for want of an opportunity to work.

A man may find himself at sea, on the last floating plank of his vessel.

(4.) Works are plural, and may be many or few, and must require time to do them, longer or shorter.

But faith is single, one and indivisible, instantaneous and entire, or not at all.

4. The faith by which God justifies us is a living acting power, which, while it procures our pardon, as a condition, produces obedience.

“Faith without works is dead.” James ii.

III. THE ADVANTAGES OF JUSTIFICATION.

1. Justification secures “peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

The sinner, when justified, becomes reconciled to God, and ceases to contend with God, and feels peace within.

He feels that God is reconciled to him, and his soul breaks out in song,

“My God is reconcil’d,
His pard’ning voice I hear :
He owns me for his child,
I can no longer fear ;
With confidence I now draw nigh,
And Father, Abba, Father, cry.”

2. Justification produces a joyful hope of heaven.

Faith, which justifies, is always accompanied by hope, “and hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.” Rom. v. 5.

This hope is full of joy, carrying our thoughts from the sorrows of earth, upward to heaven.

With this hope in lively exercise, we can bear every trial here, and endure every storm.

“When floating on life’s troubled sea,
By storms and tempests driven,
Hope, with her radiant finger, points
To brighter scenes in heaven.”

REMARKS.

1. Salvation is all of grace, no merit being required or possible, on the part of sinners.

There is no merit in faith, nor in the works which spring from faith.

There is no merit in any amount of repentant tears, nor yet in religious zeal.

2. The conditions of salvation are so easy that all can comply and be saved.

No sinner can have an excuse.

Every sinner might be justified this hour, this moment.

No price is demanded beyond your means, and no works beyond your power.

All is free, and all may come and receive pardon in the name of Christ.

Come then just as you are, with all your guilt, and as you come say in your heart,

“Rock of Ages! cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in thee;
Let the water and the blood,
From thy wounded side which flowed,
Be of sin the double cure,
Save from wrath and make me pure.

Could my tears forever flow,
Could my zeal no langor know,
This for sin could not atone,
Thou must save and thou alone:
In my hand no price I bring,
Simply to thy cross I cling.”

3. Justification is of the first importance to every sinner.

Its nature renders it important.

The change it effects in our relation renders it important.

The peace with God which it secures renders it important.

Will you now accept of peace?

THE INFLUENCE WE EXERT.

“For none of us liveth to himself.—ROM. XIV. 7.

To live to ourselves is to devote life to our own selfish ends, to seek our own gratification, regardless of the claims of God and the good of men.

No christian can so live ; christians live to do the will of God, and to be useful to their fellow beings.

Those who attempt to live to themselves cannot be Christians.

But no man can live to himself if he would ; we all affect others by our manner of life, whether we design it or not.

God's intelligent universe may be as one chain of responsible agents, in which every individual constitutes one link, by whose conduct all the parts may be affected.

Every link is equally related to God, whose will is the universal law.

One link may move every link.

The conduct of one may affect a whole moral system, as the motion of one link in a chain may move all the links.

Every day we are not only filling out our own destiny, but are by the influence we exert, writing the destiny of others upon the imperishable parchment of their immortal souls.

What I wish to accomplish in the present discourse, is to impress myself and you, with our fearful responsibility in view of the influence we exert.

To accomplish this end, I will discuss four distinct propositions in regard to our influence.

1. Every person exerts an influence.

Influence is that unseen, mysterious power by which mind acts on mind.

It is a power that acts whether we will it or not.

To attempt not to exert an influence, is only to exert it in another way, or in another direction ; but to withhold it is impossible.

If we were to fly from our associations into the deepest solitude, that act would leave its influence behind us, to act on the circle, even after it should be forgotten that we had ever been there.

There is not so much difference in the degree of influence which different persons exert as some suppose.

The difference is more in kind and in the sphere than in degree.

We must distinguish between influence and power.

The despot, who moves an empire by his nod, has great power, but may have very little influence.

Men resort to power where influence fails.

We must also distinguish between influence, as a power that moves others, and a mere running before public opinion, as though

we drew the multitude after us, when we only run in their course.

Many persons have been thought to have great influence, when they only showed the course of popular sentiment.

All men have their influence in their own legitimate spheres.

Rustic circles, beyond the refinements of educated society, have their guiding minds, whose opinions weigh as much as Newton's, Locke's, Blackstone's, Story's or Webster's in their circles.

The most vicious and degraded exert an influence over others of their own class, as all-controlling as that exerted by Luther, Calvin, or Wesley over their disciples.

Such also exert a repulsive influence on the good and virtuous.

Thus do all men exert an influence.

2. Influence is exerted in various ways.

Influence is not generated exclusively by the deep laid plans of dark and designing hearts.

It is not exerted exclusively by the great benevolent moral machinery of the age.

It is not limited to intended results.

It flows from the pen of every writer.

It distils upon the lips of every speaker.

It is evolved from every brow, on which is seen the out-hanging shadow of the dark and angry soul within.

It radiates upon the cheerful and benevolent countenance, which is the out-shining of the soul within.

It is shot from every eye in the out-bursting flash of an angry soul, or in the mild glow of love's tranquilizing and subduing flame.

Influence is constant and continuous in its action.

It does not, like physical force, exhaust its projectile power in proportion to the momentum it imparts.

3. Influence is always good or evil, and tends to bless or curse those upon whom it acts.

Influence exerted upon a mind, modifies the mental state, and a thought, an emotion, a desire, or a purpose is the result.

All these states are right or wrong, and make us better or worse.

Thus we make our fellows around us better or worse by the influence we exert upon them.

We are not to suppose we have done no harm because we have not killed, robbed, cheated, bruised, beaten and slandered anybody.

We may make an unseen impression on the mind, slight at first, yet fatal as death in the final result.

Several agents may be concerned, each helping to reach the final result.

Thus men ruin men by the influence they exert.

It is often said, that men make their own character, and determine their own destiny.

So they do, but not without help.

Take the case of the son of pious parents, drawn from the path of rectitude by corrupt associates.

This young man made his own character, but he was powerfully helped.

Take the case of a ruined daughter.

The first evil influence only drew her into a slight impropriety.

The second drew her into a slight imprudence,

The third drew her into a slight immorality.

The fourth corrupted her principles or her heart or both.

The fifth effected her ruin.

She made her own character, but she did it under a pressure of influence, but for which she would never have left the path of virtue.

Step by step, little by little, the work was done, and the influence that finished it may have been the least.

Take as another illustration, a child of the degraded and vile, rescued, and redeemed, and saved by a Sunday School teacher.

This redeemed one has made his own character, but it has been by means of powerful help.

This shows that we are not to conclude that we can do no good, because we cannot save the life of some one by snatching him or her from the water or the flames.

Because we cannot give food to one dying of hunger.

Because we cannot cure the sick unto death.

Because we cannot bestow a fortune upon the poor.

There is a higher work we can do.

The point under consideration is, that our influence is always good or evil.

To ruin by our influence, as above supposed, is more than murder.

To rescue and elevate, is more than to save life.

We are helping to save or ruin our fellow beings around us.

4. When we have exerted an influence, we have set in motion a moral power which we cannot control, and which may act forever.

A word spoken may be taken back, an opinion affirmed may be recanted, and an action performed may be repented of, but the impression made on deathless minds may never be effaced.

An impression made upon one mind may transmit that impression to the next, and so it may pass on forever.

Electricity comes nearest to our ideas of spirit.

An electric shock would be felt through the entire length of a connected circle of living beings, if it extended round the world.

Mind impresses its likeness on mind, and the work of photographing may go on forever.

Lights and shades may modify, but the outline may remain the same.

When we have exerted an influence, we have set off a power on wings that may never tire.

We have rippled the waters of universal mind, and the agitation, first local and circumscribed, may spread its circles wider and wider, until in eternity there shall be no shore to stay the onward wave.

At this fearful point of view, allow me to begin to bring my remarks to a close by remarking,

1. It is a fearful thing to be, to live, to act, under such circumstances of responsibility, so allied to an imperishable universe.

We cannot throw off our responsibility; we cannot cease to exert our influence; we can only direct it to do good or evil.

If Paul could compare the church to a living body, and the members to the parts of that body, as the eye, the hand, the foot, may not God's moral universe be compared to one living whole, of which every responsible agent is a part, a member.

Then are the actions of each of us the pulsations of one living heart of the system, sending by each throb, a current of its own character into the great living body, for good or evil.

Reflect that our every action is a pulsation that effects the health of God's moral system, and how fearful is it to live.

Reflect that these currents of influence we send out as heart-throbs beating through the system, may reach the very throne of God in their results.

They may also reach the lowest depths of perdition.

2. What has our influence been? in what direction has it been exerted?

Has it been elevating and saving in its results? or has it been degrading and viciating?

Is the world better or worse to-day, for the influence we have exerted in it?

Are some saved already by our influence?

Speak, celestial spheres! and tell us who are there from our circle, helped upward by our influence!

Are some already lost through our influence?

Speak, caverns of the deep! have any been sent down to you by our influence?

This is no dream, we are really sending our fellows to heaven or hell by our influence.

What has that influence been?

3. What shall our influence be for time to come?

What do we propose to make it under this presentation of the subject?

We may not be able to counteract our influence where it has been wrong, but we can change its course for the future.

The highest considerations that can persuade intelligence, move us to consider and guard the influence we exert, and to see that it is put forth in a right direction.

If it has been wrong, stop it; turn it into the channel of right.

Allow not your friends and fellow-beings to be carried any nearer final ruin by the current of your influence.

HEARING AND DOING.

"But be ye doers of the Word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own soul."—JAMES I. 22.

In the preceding verse, James tells us how to hear the word of the Gospel.

"Receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls."

In the text he tells us how to render hearing effectual.

It is by reducing what we hear to practice.

"Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only."

We have then before us, the process by which we must be saved, if saved at all.

Two things are required,

I. WE MUST HEAR THE WORD, WHICH CONTAINS THE WHOLE PLAN OF SALVATION.

Hearing may denote receiving and obeying the Gospel.

In this sense those who read the Scriptures attentively and obey them, may be said to hear the word.

But in the text, hearing appears to mean proper attention to the Gospel, as preached by appointed ministers of the word.

As a general principle, this is essential to salvation.

1. God has appointed the preaching of the word as a means of saving men.

"Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature."

"For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher." Rom. x. 13, 14.

"For after that, in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." 1 Cor. i. 21.

2. Hearing the word preached is a means of promoting correct and uniform views in regard to all the fundamental truths of religion.

The pulpit does more to mould religious sentiment within its circle, than all other influences together.

Hearing the Gospel preached is a means of impressing the heart with the truth.

"The word of God is quick and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword." Heb. iv. 12.

"Seeing we have this ministry we faint not; but have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth, commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God." 2 Cor. iv. 1, 2.

All experience proves that hearing the word is a principal means of salvation.

How few of all the saved, have not been saved as the result of hearing?

Those who never hear, are seldom if ever saved.

II. WE MUST BE DOERS OF THE WORD WE HEAR.

The Gospel was not so much designed to amuse our imaginations, nor even enlighten our heads, as to rule our hearts and direct our lives.

To be doers of the word, two things are necessary.

1. We must subscribe to it in our hearts when we hear it.

Hearing is a duty, but it is not a duty as an end, but a duty as a means to an end.

We must hear to learn and know, and thus to hear, we must subscribe to the truth in our hearts.

We must believe the truth and receive it as a rule of life.

The only question we are allowed to raise is, does the man preach the Gospel.

When we recognize the Gospel, we must recognize it as speaking authoritatively.

It presents the absolute authority of God, or no authority at all.

2. We must obey the word, must practice it in our lives.

Hearing will not save us, unless we do as well as hear.

To be hearers and not doers, is to be guilty of not doing as well as we know.

To be doers of the word is to obey it, to do all that is commanded.

It is not to do some few things required, to perform our duty occasionally, it is to do all that is commanded.

No man has a right to assume that God will save him in the neglect of any one duty.

A man that has neglected duty, and even sinned greatly, may hope to be saved, but it is by reformation, not that he can be saved in his sinning and neglect of duty.

Nor does the doctrine of salvation by grace through faith, conflict with this idea of the necessity of obedience.

The fact is, that no sinner can exercise the required faith, only in that state of mind in which the heart renounces all sin, and pledges all obedience.

We must then do, as well as hear the word.

This the text absolutely settles by affirming virtually, that if we depend upon hearing without doing, we deceive ourselves.

We mistake the true condition of salvation, and, consequently, miss the object.

REMARKS.

1. How little real hearing there is done.

How many never go where the Gospel is preached.

How many who really go to the sanctuary at the hour of preaching, never really hear.

2. How much more hearing there is than real doing.

How many hear the Gospel attentively, and are interested with it, as a theory, who never attempt to reduce it to practice.

3. There is a loud call for reform among us.

There are perhaps none among us but may find room for reform.

It should commence at the house of God.

Suppose all who profess religion were to do all the duties religion requires.

Suppose all the churches were composed of living, working, doing members.

Suppose all who hear the word from this glad hour, would begin to be doers of the word, the day of salvation would dawn.

JEHOVAH'S REIGN.

"The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice ; let the multitudes of isles be glad thereof."—PSAL. XCVII. 1.

[PREACHED SABBATH, JULY 12, 1863.]

We have no certain information in regard to the occasion upon which this Psalm was composed.

It, no doubt, celebrates some grand display of the Divine power, in favor of truth and justice.

The Jews, wicked as they were, were more ready to acknowledge the hand of God in what befel them, than we are.

We have occasion to-day to adopt the language of the text.

We will consider the great truth asserted, and then explain its relation to our present circumstances, and notice the glad response with which it should meet.

I. THE GREAT TRUTH ASSERTED IN THE TEXT.

"The Lord reigneth."

To reign is to rule, to govern.

God governs the world.

1. God's government is moral, a government directed by moral influence.

He does not govern man as he governs the physical world.

He appeals to his judgment, his conscience, and to his hopes and fears.

2. The government of God is directed to beneficent ends.

The good of the moral universe is the end aimed at.

3. The government of God is universal, and extends to all moral beings, to all places, and through all time.

4. The government of God is efficient, and shall finally prove triumphant.

God is all-wise to plan, good to design, and powerful to execute, and cannot fail.

There may be a thousand failures in the view of human minds, but God who sees the end from the beginning, knows no failure, and we shall find at last that there has been none.

II. LET US CONSIDER THIS OUTLINE VIEW OF THE GOVERNMENT OF GOD, AS IT STANDS RELATED TO OUR PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES.

We are involved in one of the most terrible wars that ever visited and desolated a civilized land.

If God reigns, his reign comprehends this fearful war.

1. The war itself under the government of God, was, doubtless, a moral necessity.

Without it God could not carry forward his government to its legitimate results.

Slavery reigned and ruled the nation.

It shut out the light of heaven, and crushed out the rights of men.

It disregarded alike the voice of God, and the tears of humanity.

It was set up in the nation, like the golden image set up in the plain of Dura, and the nation bowed down before it.

If there were a few Shadrachs, Meshachs and Abednegos, they were a despised and persecuted few.

Every third man, woman and child in the nation was a chattel. Nothing but the shock of war could break up the system.

God warned the South, and the nation, and they heeded it not.

He then left the South, the most guilty party, to begin the war in defense of their wrong, that their own wrong might prove their overthrow.

2. The same moral necessity which called for the war, has continued it through two fearfully bloody years, and the end is not yet.

The government undertook to put down the rebellion without the overthrow of slavery.

They, in such a course, could not have God on their side, and could not succeed.

3. God has rendered the protracted war subservient to his government, by effecting, through it, a great change of public opinion, in regard to the great evil which caused the war.

The government and nation went into the war with a determination to save slavery, but the government and nation are now determined to destroy slavery.

So soon as the government undertook to overthrow slavery, as a means of putting down the rebellion, and adopted a corresponding policy, our arms have been crowned with success.

No human reason can show why we have not succeeded before, other than that earlier success would have defeated God's purpose in permitting the war. Surely, the Lord reigneth.

III. LET US CONSIDER THE GLAD RESPONSE WHICH THIS EXHIBITION OF GOD'S REIGN SHOULD CALL FORTH.

"Let the earth rejoice, let the multitudes of isles be glad thereof."

1. The success is to be attributed to God.

Not one word against our brave officers and men, they have stood firmly, fought bravely, and successfully, yet who but God nerved them, and presided over their destinies of those three dreadful days. There was a power and a director there above Meade and Lee.

2. The character and greatness of the triumphs recently achieved, call for great joy and gladness.

The Rebel invasion has been rolled back, Vicksburg has fallen, the enemy driven from Tennessee, the foe beaten in Arkansas, besides several smaller successes.

3. The joy which these events are calculated to awaken, belongs, not to us alone, but to all the friends of God and man, the world over.

"Let the earth rejoice, let the multitudes of isles be glad thereof."

These successes, indicate a final success, which will result in blessings to the whole world.

REMARKS.

1. I have found an occasion to-day, to apply the doctrine of Divine Providence to our national matters, yet we should not overlook the fact, that Providence regards individuals as well as nations.

Nations offend God and are overthrown, and the same is true of individuals.

It is only upon this ground that we, as individuals, can rest upon God's promises, or dread his threatenings.

Promises and threatenings are alike nugatory, without a Providential executive power to execute them.

This doctrine, understood and applied, will give us courage, and support, and comfort amid all the changes and trials that fill up individual human allotment.

We may know that "the Lord reigneth," and that too, in the dark and cloudy day, as well as in the sunshiny hour.

2. However dark and mysterious the path of life may appear, we are to trust God, and do his will, knowing that he will bring us safe through.

We are told that the trial of our faith is "more precious than gold that perisheth."

If all was smooth in this life, where would be the room for the exercise of benevolence, patience and trust.

Trust then in God, and though you cannot see his hand, yet believe and say,

“What, though thou rulest not ;
 Yet heaven, and earth, and hell,
 Proclaim,—God sitteth on the throne,
 And ruleth all things well.”

Trust God at all times, and in all places, and in all conditions.
 O ye troubled and anxious ones, here lay down your burdens.

“He points the clouds their course,
 Whom winds and seas obey,
 He shall direct thy wandering feet.
 He shall prepare thy way.

No profit can'st thou gain
 By self-consuming care :
 To him commend thy cause,—his ear
 Attends the softest prayer.”

3. Eternity will solve all mysteries, and with its light, consume the last cloud of darkness that veils the sky of Divine Providence.

LOVE FOR THE BROTHERHOOD.

“We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren.”—1 JOHN III. 14.

No one can read the epistles of John and not perceive that he insists that love is the essence of religion, and Paul, writing to the Corinthians, says, If love be wanting, we are as empty brass, a tinkling sound.

Our text is a sure test that we have passed from death unto life, or that we have been truly converted, and are Christians. But it is possible to mistake the nature of love for the brethren. Let us, then, examine the nature and characteristics of true love. And here we remark, negatively,

1. It is not love of sect, or denominational attachment. A person may be ardently attached to a denomination, and yet an utter stranger to the love of Christ, or true love for the brethren. A true Christian may have, and doubtless has, strong attachment for the denomination of his choice. This is perfectly consistent

with genuine love to God and the brethren. But it is not love *for* the brethren.

2. It is not pleasure arising from agreeableness. A person may be courteous and kind, and a very agreeable companion, and yet we cannot love him as a Christian.

3. It is not the excitement of passionate fondness. Some persons have a fascinating and winning way, and we become fond of their society, but this is not love of the church.

It is a holy attachment, because they are like Christ. The more perfectly they reflect the image of Jesus, the stronger is the mutual attachment. It is a love of complacency and fellowship. A union of heart, because both are united with Christ. True love manifests itself,

1. In delight in their company. The social intercourse, especially the seasons of social prayer, are sources of real enjoyment to those who love the brethren.

2. Sympathy in their afflictions. True love can weep with those that weep.

3. Charitable toward their imperfections. To err is human. True love can excuse many imperfections. It does not require that we should think black is white, or that those we love are always right. But it leads us to put the best construction upon the words and actions of others circumstances will allow. In this way love will hide a multitude of faults

4. Tender of their reputation. A Christian's character is to him of great value. True love will endeavor to strengthen his reputation. Paul says, "charity thinketh no evil," and certainly it will not delight in taking up and spreading an evil report. Some people, if they hear any evil of another, cannot rest until they have told it upon the housetop. It is not love that prompts them to this course. It is doing the special work of the "old accuser of the brethren."

5. True brotherly love is faithful in co-operation. Some Christian duties each must do alone. Other duties can only be accomplished by co-operation, such as maintaining discipline in the church, social meetings and public worship.

Love for the brethren is willing to bear the burdens of religion with the church. By this mutual love the world shall take knowledge of us, that we have been with Jesus.—*Morning Star*.

BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

The Scriptures are a revelation from God, yet their meaning is to be determined, the same as the meaning of any other document, by interpretation. God has not, and does not communicate this revelation to each member of the human family, directly and individually, but made it to persons chosen for that purpose, to be communicated, by them to their fellow-beings. As language is the medium of communication between men, God had to employ the language of men, in communicating his will, through his chosen seers, to the rest of mankind. In doing this, he employed the language then in use, as he found it.

As the Hebrew language flourished in the days of Moses and the prophets, the Old Testament was first written in Hebrew. As the Greek language was most generally spoken in the time of the Evangelists and Apostles, the New Testament was written in Greek. From these languages translations have been made, so that those who are not acquainted with Hebrew and Greek, can read the Scriptures in their vernacular tongues. But whether they are read in the original languages, or in our own English, the sense is reached only by correct interpretation. Biblical interpretation is therefore just as important as a correct understanding of the Scriptures.

Interpretation must proceed upon certain general and uniform principles, which should be studied and understood by all, and by ministers in particular. Every reader of the Scriptures has to be, to some extent, an interpreter. He has to give to each word a signification, and to each sentence a sense, and so he arrives at the meaning of what he reads.

But ministers are professional interpreters, and are required, in every sermon, to interpret for the instruction and edification of others. Ministers may talk, may exhort, and even teach, without taking a text ; it is interesting and useful so to do ; but if a text be taken, it should be explained, and its true sense be given. The sermon should be such an exhibition of Biblical Interpretation, as will throw the sense of the text open to the clear view of the hearer. Unless this be done, the text is of no use to the ser-

mon, and had better be omitted. Ministers, therefore, should study constantly and deeply, the principles of Biblical Interpretation, and labor to become masters of the science.

The importance of sound Biblical Interpretation cannot be over-rated. The truths of the Scriptures can do us no good, if they are not understood and correctly applied, and this understanding and application is the work of sound interpretation. The Bible is held to be a book of one language, truthful and harmonious in all its parts, when correctly interpreted ; hence, all the false and conflicting views held among men, professedly founded upon the Scriptures, are the result of false interpretation. We shall give a brief series of articles on the subject in our pages, hoping in this way, to contribute something towards a correct interpretation of the sacred volume.

THE FIRST PRINCIPLES OF THE SCIENCE.

1. Every word correctly used in composition or speech, has some meaning, and represents some thought or idea. If a word does not represent an idea, it is of no use, and had better be omitted. Language is used only as a medium of communicating thoughts from one mind to another mind. Words which do not represent ideas, communicate nothing, and are useless, both in a written document, and in an address.

2. No word can have more than one meaning in the same relation, at the same time and in the same place. Words may have different meanings in different relations, but never at the same time and in the same place. Suppose one principal word in a simple sentence, to have two meanings, the sentence would express two simple ideas, and who could tell which the author intended? And if two words could have, each two meanings at the same time, the sentence would express four simple ideas. If a word can have two meanings at the same time, it may have more, and language becomes confused and infinitely indefinite.

3. Most words admit of different meanings as they are used in different relations and applied to different subjects. Take as an example the word *cleave*: God said a man "shall cleave to his wife." Gen. ii. 24. But the Psalmist says to God, "Thou didst cleave the fountain and the flood." In the first of these texts, cleave means to adhere to ; in the second, it means to divide asunder. The meanings are exactly opposite, but sometimes the

same word, in different relations, has not opposite meanings, but only a different signification, growing out of the same general idea.

4. Words are often used in a figurative sense, in which, while they retain their proper meaning, that meaning is applied to things to which it does not properly belong, and herein lies the figure, as when it is said that anger burns, and that a fool's wrath is heavier than both stone and sand. The word burn does not express the action of anger, nor does the word heavy express the quality of wrath, only in a figurative sense.

The preceding four facts lay the foundation for the science of Biblical Interpretation, and the work of the interpreter is, first to determine the meaning of each word ; then to combine them and determine the meaning of each sentence ; and then, combining these, to determine the meaning of the whole paragraph, chapter, or subject. In doing this he must distinguish between literal and figurative language. This requires much attention and discrimination, as words admit of so many shades of sense, and as the literal and figurative are so closely blended, often in the same sentence. How to accomplish this will be the subject of future consideration.

THE PREACHING REQUIRED BY THE TIMES.

A knowledge of the preaching required by the times is useful, and ought to be acquired by those who desire to be skilful as well as faithful workmen, rightly dividing the word of truth, and giving to saint and sinner their portion in due season. When this is the object of the preacher it is important that he should know how to adapt his discourse in order to accomplish it, so far as human agency is concerned. It ought to be borne in mind, however, that the preaching of the gospel in all its essential points must ever remain the same. When the Great Head of the Church, in giving his last charge unto his disciples previous to his ascension, commanded them to "preach the gospel to every creature," and added the encouraging promise, "Lo I am with you alway, even unto

the end of the world," he doubtless meant to convey the idea, that the doctrines which they were then commanded to preach were destined to meet the wants of man's spiritual nature through all succeeding ages until the end of time. The only variation which is allowable is, to dwell more particularly on those subjects which may be suited to the wants and circumstances of those who are addressed. The following items may be mentioned as characteristic of the preaching required by the times, and perhaps I might add all times.

1. *A thorough knowledge of the doctrines of the Bible.* The necessity of this is so obvious that it is unnecessary to dwell upon it, further than to observe, that for a man to pretend to teach what he does not understand is a manifest absurdity.

2. *Simplicity and plainness of language.* This is a marked feature of effective preaching. When our Lord delivered his sermon on the Mount, instead of dealing in abstruse speculations, which would be understood by few of his hearers, he illustrated his subject by referring to things common and familiarly known,—to the lilies of the field, and the fowls of the air,—illustrations which would be understood by the most unlearned of his hearers. When Paul preached on Mar's hill, although he was a learned man, and in all probability was preaching unto the most learned audience in the world, yet he used plain, simple language. During the first ages of the Christian Church, the preaching was marked by an artless simplicity, yet it was powerful in effecting the conversion of sinners.

3. *Adaptation.* This is a marked feature of those sermons which have been sketched by the pen of inspiration. When the Saviour discoursed unto the Jews, he explained and enforced the nature and necessity of true religion of which they had very erroneous ideas. When Paul preached at Athens, he showed the folly and absurdity of idolatry, to which his hearers were addicted, and explained to them the character of the true God. One crying sin of the professedly Christian world at the present day, is a tendency to formality and indifference to vital piety; therefore, the nature and necessity of vital experimental piety ought to be much dwelt upon. As the doctrines of justification by faith alone on the ground of the Redeemer's righteousness, which is unto all, provided for all, and sanctification through the Holy Spirit, through

the gospel, are always adapted to meet the wants of man's spiritual nature, they ought always to be brought prominently before the people, in all their fullness, freeness, and extent.

4. *Earnestness.* This is highly necessary in order to preach successfully. It is not the mere appearance of it which is wanted, it is earnestness which dwells in the inmost soul of the preacher, and from thence pervades his whole being,—his words, his actions, and even his looks, convincing all with whom he comes in contact that he is in earnest about eternal things.

5. *The accompanying influence of the Holy Spirit.* This is the great and essential requisite of effective preaching. Without this the preacher may have every natural and acquired ability, and be master of all requisite knowledge, and yet his choicest efforts will be utterly powerless, at least so far as the conversion of the soul is concerned. The history of the Church, in every age, goes to prove, that it is not by might nor by strength, but by the Spirit of the Lord, that her spiritual conquests are to be gained. If we examine the history of the apostles, the reformers, of Bunyan, Baxter, Whitfield, Wesley, Fletcher, Caughey, Hammond, and other successful preachers, we shall find that their success is to be attributed not so much to their talents, as to the Spirit's influence carrying conviction to the hearts and consciences of their hearers. When the Spirit descended upon the Church, on the day of Pentecost, in the shape of tongues of fire, it was the symbol which announced to her the advent of her conquering power. May its influence ever remain with the Church, inspiring all her energies, and leading her forth to yet greater conquests, until it shall have been proclaimed, through every land, "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and his Christ; and He shall reign forever and forever." Amen.—*Canadian Day-Star.*

BEGIN RIGHT.—KEEP RIGHT.

How much of life is occupied with useless thoughts and considerations? If men generally could grasp the right idea first, and keep it, on all subjects that demand our attention, how much

time could be saved? Some few men appear to have an almost intuitive perception of truth, when any new subject is presented, and such waste but little time with error, and seldom change; but with most men it is otherwise.

1. Many men start wrong; they embrace false views, and waste much precious time in studying, elaborating, and defending them. When years have passed, or may be, when life is half spent they see their error and abandon it, and embrace the truth. But such are not as strong in the truth as they would have been, had they embraced the truth at first. Nor is the truth itself as strong as it would have been, had they spent their energies in building it up, rather than in building up error.

2. Some embrace the truth at first, and after believing and advocating it for years, abandon it and embrace error, and waste the second half of life, in efforts to overthrow what they built up during the first half. The path of most men is strewn with cast-off ideas, many of which are imbibed by others before they are rejected by their first possessor, and others, the opinions of authors, are left visibly strewn upon the sands of time, to be seen and picked up or passed by, by coming travelers.

These scattered thoughts along the path of those who went before us, are a mixture of truth and error, and are like gems that glitter in the dust to make the finder rich, or like poisoned fruits scattered by the way to sicken and kill those who pick them up. Beware, traveler, and get right, and keep right.

YOUNG MINISTERS IN SMALL PLACES.

But suppose a young man has paid attention to public speaking, I would by no means advise him to seek for a first settlement in a large congregation, or in a populous city, but rather to avoid them. Let him choose a less prominent place, where, exposed to fewer temptations, he may labor in the Master's service, and confirm those habits of heart and mind, and acquire that skill in the performance of the duties of the ministry, which may prepare him

for more extended usefulness. It is unwise to place a young and wholly inexperienced minister in a situation sufficiently arduous to task the skill, and energy, and talent of a man in the full maturity of his strength. A young man placed in such a situation, if he be conscientious, and feels the responsibility placed upon him, will probably labor beyond his strength, and come to a premature grave. If he treat his responsibility lightly, he will perform the work of an ambassador professionally, and, ere long, come to an ignominious failure. Let not a young man suppose that by taking charge of a small church, his talent will be buried, and his sphere of usefulness limited. If he does his duty, that church will not continue small. Men of tried piety, good sense, and ministerial qualifications, are ever in demand; and he will soon have the opportunity of selecting his situation. It is, however, far from certain that his selection, if he act wisely, will be any other place than that in which the great Shepherd has fixed his lot. A settlement in a city is by no means to be coveted.—*Dr. Wayland.*

OUT OF THE PULPIT.

What the pastoral habits of a minister should be, is more told than practiced. Perhaps there is no part of his duty which is less satisfactorily performed by the majority of those who are truly called of God to the office and work of the ministry. It is not so difficult to cultivate a suavity and affability which will make one always, and everywhere welcome. But to introduce religion into the parlor as readily as into the pulpit, and to the collected family as easily as to the collected flock, I have to confess I have not always found it. Nevertheless, there is no part of the work of a minister more important, and, if faithfully performed, none which will yield a richer harvest. And this duty will be a delight in proportion to the confidence with which he can say concerning his people as Christ said of his disciples, "For their sake I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth."—*Selected.*

A GOOD MINISTER.—Several things are requisite to constitute a good minister. There must be a good degree of knowledge, a good judgment, a good delivery, as well as an easy manner and pleasing deportment. But all these may meet in one person, and he not be a good minister. There is one other and indispensable qualification. He who would be a good minister, must first be a good christian. Personal piety is necessary to constitute a good minister. An unconverted man may preach learned and eloquent sermons, but they usually fall powerless, because the voice of God is not heard in them.

PREACH CHRIST.—There are many able and learned sermons preached, which do but little good, because they have but little savor of Christ in them. It is said of Dr. Mason, that on being asked his opinion of a sermon, to which he had just listened, he replied: "I admire the sermon for the beauty of its style, the splendor of its imagery, the correctness of its sentiments, and for the point of its argument, but it needed to be baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, to entitle it to the name of a Christian sermon." No sermon should be preached which has not enough of Christ in it to save the hearer, if he heeds it, and never hears another.

TAKE NOTHING FOR GRANTED.—We should know the reason for everything we believe or do. It is dangerous to take things for granted, even on authority, without inquiry. Nothing is so absurd as not to be supported by authority, and nothing so obviously right, as not to be condemned and opposed. Remember, where there is perfect freedom of speech, there is likely to be much complaining where there is but little suffering; but under a despotism, there is likely to be much suffering with but little complaint.

IMPOSSIBLE TO PLEASE.—We know of no man so fortunate as to please everybody. So-called great men, around whom applauding multitudes rally, have at the same time their bitter opposers. If then you must have opposers, be sure they oppose you because you are right; and if you must be despised and hated, let it be for your goodness. Such opposition will not ultimately harm you.

REMEMBER THE CHILDREN IN THE PULPIT.—Children very soon become capable of being benefited by preaching. It is safe, however, to say that they are not benefited so largely as they would be, if the ministrations of the pulpit were better adapted to, and more attention paid them. Where a considerable number of children attend public preaching, they should not be entirely overlooked by the preacher. They should occasionally be roused to attention and thought, by having their minds called to some portions of truth adapted and addressed directly to them. Simplicity is all that is required, and the minister that cannot do it successfully, is wanting in skill ; and he that can and does not, is wanting in zeal for God and humanity.

PRAY MUCH.—Ministers may always find enough to do. They have much visiting to do ; they need to read and study much, and have many extra services to perform. These various branches of labor can be performed, only by a judicious division of time, and by attending to each in its proper order. But there is another work which must not interfere with any of these labors, and with which none of these must interfere. That work is prayer. Much prayer should mingle with every effort ; all reading, meditation, visiting and preaching, should be accompanied by earnest and believing prayer. Prayer gives tone and power to every other work.

KNOW YOUR OPPORTUNITY.—Most wants are the result of a failure to improve the opportunity of supplying them. The great art of successful life, lies in the skill of improving the golden moment of opportunity, by seizing upon the good when it is within our reach. Many wants are suffered which might have been supplied, had not the opportunity been neglected ; and more wants will be suffered, if we neglect the present, by wasting time in regrets over opportunities already gone, or in waiting for the future to bring new ones. The present is all that we can now improve. Seize upon the present !

SHORT SERMONS.—Hearers seldom find fault because a sermon is too short, but often because it is too long ; therefore study brevity, clearness and force. Concentrate your energy on a smaller space, and greater will be the result.

AN ESTIMATE OF HUMAN LIFE.

"So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom."—PSAL. XC. 12.

This Psalm opens with a most solemn and sublime description of the eternity of God, in contrast with the frailty and transient existence of man.

It is then clearly admitted that the follies and miseries of human life, are the result of human wrong, either our own wrong, or the wrongs of our fathers.

After this confession, a prayer is offered to God, and his favor is earnestly sought.

My text is the first petition in this prayer.

"So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom."

The sense of this is, give us that light which will enable us to make such a true estimate of life, as will lead us to improve according to true wisdom.

In what sense then are we called upon to number our days? and what is the practical lesson of wisdom to be derived from the enumeration?

I. IN WHAT SENSE ARE WE CALLED UPON TO NUMBER OUR DAYS?

To number is to count, so as to learn the units of a sum or collection of things.

The object of this enumeration is to learn the sum total of life, in its several aspects and relations.

1. We should consider and estimate the whole number of our days, as the basis of all other calculations.

Three score and ten years are the total estimated number.

This period appears longer than it really is.

This is proved by contemplating ten years prospectively, and ten years retrospectively.

The prospective ten years will appear much the longest.

There are two reasons why a prospective period appears longer than a retrospective period.

(1.) In childhood everything appears larger than in after life.

So time appears longer to children.

Return to the place of childhood's scenes after years of absence,

and distances, streams, hills and mountains will all appear less than the impression on the mind.

This remark is true of those who leave their childhood's home while yet children, and return in manhood.

(2.) The objects of hope always lie in the future, and the influence of hope is to make the intervening period appear longer.

"Hope springs immortal in the human breast,
Man never is but always to be blest."

This makes the future appear longer than the past.

2. We should number our days by comparing them with other periods, and time in general.

What are our days compared with the days of the patriarchs?

Methuselah's days were fourteen times as many as ours.

What is life compared with the whole of time?

Suppose a man to be among us, whose memory grasps all that has transpired since the early dawn of the first day of time, how contracted would our lives look to him.

He would regard us as dying in infancy.

The Psalmist introduces the eternity of God in contrast with human life.

"Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God. Thou turnest man to destruction; and sayest, Return ye children of men. For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night. Thou carriest them away as with a flood; they are as a sleep; in the morning they are like grass which groweth up. In the morning it flourisheth, and groweth up; in the evening it is cut down and withereth."

There is great sublimity, beauty and force in the language of the Psalmist.

3. We should number our days by bringing human life to an averaged period.

Seventy years is the limit, but this period is reached but by very few.

We die at every stage of life.

Life may be compared to a journey of seventy miles.

All commence this journey at the same point, but from the very first step they begin to die, and die all along the way to the end.

Life may be compared to a voyage of seventy days.

A fleet leaves port together, but are wrecked and stranded all along the shore, so that but few reach the end.

Making all these deductions, human life will average but about thirty years.

4. We should number our days by making a proper distinction between fictitious and real life.

Fictitious life embraces those portions of time which sustain no practical relation to the great end of our being.

These periods are to life what blank leaves are in a book of history.

Infancy and much of childhood is fictitious time.

Sleep is fictitious time.

It is like the time during which the machinist, or miller, has to shut the gate and stop his whole operation, to let his exhausted pond of water fill up.

There are in the experience of every one, many hours of mental langor, and heavy hours which are wished away.

But the worst of all is, time criminally wasted, and thrown away.

Some idle away precious hours.

Some dance away precious time.

5. We should number our days by computing the amount of good and ill which make up the portion of our earthly allotment.

How few of all our days have been really happy days?

How many days have we seen upon which we thought we had no cause of complaint? No ill to wish away; no absent good to desire; no want unsupplied; no change desired for the sake of improvement; no solicitude to make us feel uneasy; no cloud to throw its shadow on the soul.

How many have been our days of deep, if not overwhelming sorrows?

How few in kind and insufficient in degree are the real pleasures of life?

They are but five in number.

(1) Seeing is one source of pleasure.

(2.) Hearing is another source of pleasure.

(3.) Smelling is another source of pleasure.

(4.) Tasting is another source of pleasure.

(5.) Feeling is another source of pleasure.

How unfrequent are our opportunities for enjoying these pleasures of sense.

How insufficient are they when even their measure is full.

They can be enjoyed only in very small portions.

An attempt at a large draught is sure to spoil the whole.

How short lived are all these pleasures of sense.

The very senses through which we enjoy these pleasures, often become the inlets of fearful pains and anguish.

The fact of the insufficiency of our pleasures, and of an excess of pain and sorrow, cannot fail to have an important bearing on our ideas of duration, making life appear longer than it really is.

II. THE PRACTICAL LESSON OF WISDOM TO BE DERIVED FROM THIS ENUMERATION OF OUR DAYS.

1. The view that has been taken of life, should teach us to improve it with principal reference to the life to come.

Neither the joys or sorrows of earth should be a controlling element in life's arrangements.

What are the pleasures of earth to betray us into the pains of hell?

What are the sorrows of earth to prevent us from seeking the joys of heaven?

We should not allow ourselves to be impressed too deeply by either.

They are both short and will soon pass away.

It is the relation which this life sustains to the life to come, which gives to it its importance.

Every year, month, week, day and hour has a direct bearing upon our future destiny.

2. The uncertainty of life, which the above numbering of four days reveals, admonishes us not to defer for a moment, what is essential to a safe entry upon the scenes and destiny of eternity.

We know not the day nor the hour when time with us will close.

How often is it the case that men die just as they think they are ready to live.

When the rich man in the Gospel said, "soul, take thy ease," that very night death came.

We are sure of nothing but the present moment ; to-morrow is yet in eternity.

“ To-morrow, Lord. is thine,
Lodged in thy sovereign hand ;
And if its sun arise and shine,
It shines by thy command.

The present moment flies,
And bears our life away ;
O, make thy servants truly wise,
That they may live to-day.

Since on this fleeting hour
Eternity is hung,
Awake, by thine almighty power,
The aged and the young.

One thing demands our care ;
O, be that still pursued,
Lest, slighted once, the season fair
Should never be renewed.”

3. Life's extreme brevity, as seen from the above numbering of our days, teaches us not to misimprove a single moment.

Life will soon be gone like a departed day or a faded hour.

“ Our life as a dream, our time as a stream,
Glides swiftly away,
And the fugitive moment refuses to stay ;
The arrow is flown, the moment is gone ;
The millennial year
Rushes on to our view, and eternity's here.”

And will you waste the moments of such a short life given you to secure the happiness of eternity.

“ No room for mirth or trifling here,
For worldly hope or worldly fear,
If life so soon is gone ;
If now the Judge is at the door,
And all mankind must stand before
Th' inexorable throne!”

The changes of the year drawing to a close, admonish us that this may be our last year.

Some of us may never see Spring bloom again.

AN ESTABLISHED HEART.

“My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed.”—PSAL. LVII. 7.

The word heart, is often used to denote the whole mind, as every mental quality is frequently attributed to it.

In the text before us, it may be regarded as involving the exercise of the intelligence, in the selection of the object of the mind's pursuit ; the choice of the affections as directed towards that object ; and the determination of the will to pursue that object.

In declaring that his heart is fixed, the author simply declares the settled and unchangeable purpose of his mind.

The declaration has reference to God, and hence his appeal to God, “My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed.”

The repetition, gives emphasis, and indicates the earnestness of his feelings, and the strength of his determination.

It would be well if all were equally decisive.

In attempting to make the language of the text practically available in our own religious experience and career, I will notice two leading subjects.

I. THE MENTAL CHARACTERISTICS IMPLIED IN A FIXED STATE OF THE HEART ; AND,

II. THE OBJECTS UPON WHICH THE HEART SHOULD BE FIXED.

I. THE MENTAL CHARACTERISTICS IMPLIED IN A FIXED STATE OF THE HEART.

1. It supposes a clear conviction of the understanding.

The mind needs to have clear views of the truth, and to be entirely satisfied as to what truth is, and what it requires.

Without this, fixedness of the heart would be blind obstinacy.

2. It supposes firmness, strong resolution, a determined purpose of the will.

This is, in part, a natural endowment.

It is also susceptible of improvement by culture.

Firmness becomes an evil, only in two cases.

First, when persons are blindly firm.

Such keep themselves firm by closing their minds against the light of truth which would change their views.

Secondly, when persons are dishonestly firm.

Such are firm in what they know to be an error.

But the will can never be too strong, when it acts under the direction of the intelligence.

3. Trust in God is an essential element in a fixed state of the heart.

Without this, firmness is unwarrantable self confidence, which will fail in the hour of trial.

When we are enlightened by the truth, so that we see clearly the path of duty, and have an honest purpose to do it, and have our eye fixed on God, in full confidence of his support, we may say, "My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed."

II. THE OBJECTS UPON WHICH THE HEART SHOULD BE FIXED.

1. The heart should be fixed upon the ever-blessed God, as the object of our supreme love and devotion.

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart." Mark xii. 30.

The language of the heart should be, "Whom have I in heaven but thee, and in the earth there is none that I desire before thee." Psal. lxxiii. 25.

2. The heart should be fixed upon Christ as the only medium of approach to, and the only ground of acceptance with God.

"I am the way, the truth and the life, no man cometh unto the Father but by me." John xiv. 6.

"If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." 1 John ii. 1.

"Neither is there salvation in any other : for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved." Acts iv. 12.

"When marshalled on the nightly plain,
The glittering host bestud the sky,
One star alone of all the train,
Can fix the sinner's wandering eye.

3. The heart should be fixed upon the Holy Spirit, as the only quickening and life-giving power in the soul, and the only sufficient helper and comforter.

"The letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life." 2 Cor. iii. 6.

"Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost." Tit. iii. 5.

"When he, the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth." John xvi. 13.

"Hope maketh not ashamed ; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us." Rom. v. 5.

"The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirits that we are the children of God." Rom. viii. 16.

"Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities : for we know not what we should pray for as we ought ; but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." Verse 26.

"Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." Eph. iv. 30.

It is then clear that the Holy Spirit is the efficient agent in our salvation, and upon it should the christian's heart be fixed, as upon the only power that can renew, comfort and guide.

4. The heart should be fixed upon the Holy Scriptures, as a revelation of the will of God, and our only authoritative rule of duty.

Every religious opinion, and every act of life, should be brought to the test of the Scriptures, and made to conform thereto.

"To the law and to the testimony : if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." Isa. viii. 20.

The heart should be fixed upon the Scriptures to study and understand them.

They should be our guide in all relations in life.

5. The heart should be fixed upon the church of Christ, as the chief interest of this world, and as furnishing our most happy associations, and the principal helps in our religious life.

The church of Christ is "the light of the world."

It is the only hope of the world.

If it were blotted out, the world would be lost.

Its extension and universal triumph, would be the salvation of the world.

Our hearts should be fixed upon it as an object of strong desire and ardent love.

"If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the

roof of my mouth, if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy." Psal. cxxxvii. 5, 6.

"Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces. For my brethren and companions sake, I will now say, peace be within thee. Because of the house of the Lord our God, I will seek thy good." Psal. cxxii. 7-9.

"The Lord loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob." Psal. lxxxvii. 2.

Our heart should be fixed upon the church as a source of enjoyment and spiritual strength.

Our heart should be fixed upon the church to build it up, and make it successful and glorious.

6. Our hearts should be fixed upon heaven as our future and eternal home.

In this world we are strangers and pilgrims.

We know we cannot long remain here.

We ought to be looking away to our future home.

"Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal : for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." Matt. vi. 20, 21.

"If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God. Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth." Col. iii. 1, 2.

REMARKS.

1. Safe and happy are all such as can adopt the language of the text as their own.

Such have got the world under their feet ; its power is subdued, its charm is broken.

How many are there whose hearts are fixed ?

2. It is time for the unsettled, the wavering and wandering, to cast about them, and see whither they are drifting.

All are sure to fetch up somewhere, and find themselves fixed in some condition at last.

It is the part of wisdom to look the ground over, and settle your destiny in the light of reason and truth.

A FATHER'S BEST GIFT.

"If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children ; how much more shall your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit unto them that ask him ?"—LUKE XI. 13.

Christ uttered these words to encourage prayer.

He had said, "Ask and it shall be given you," &c.

He then appeals to parental hearts to impress us with God's good-will towards us.

"If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone?"

Then follows the text.

God here lets himself down to respond to the impulse of our throbbing hearts.

THE NATURAL THEME OF THE TEXT IS, GOD'S PARENTAL GOODNESS TO DEPRAVED HUMANITY.

I. God here offers us a very great gift.

This gift is nothing less than the Holy Spirit.

The saving influence of the Spirit is meant, not common convictions, which all sinners sometimes feel.

This gift includes all the blessings of experimental religion.

They are,

1. Justification, or the forgiveness of sin.

2. Regeneration, or the new birth, called, being born of the Spirit.

3. Adoption into the family of God.

4. Sanctification, which is being made holy, or entire consecration to God.

5. Peace, comfort, and joy.

The Spirit, with all these results, is the gift of God.

It is not our natural right.

It is not purchased by us.

It is a free gift through Christ.

II. This great gift of God is offered to us on the simple condition of asking.

We must ask for it, pray for the Spirit.

To ask properly implies,

1. A sense of our necessity ; it is an indispensable in the work of our salvation.

It is the source of our moral power.

It is the spring of our religious joy.

2. To ask implies a personal application.

We must pray for the Spirit.

3. To ask effectually, we must exercise faith, we must expect to receive.

We must also be willing to receive the Spirit, be led by it, carefully cherish it, and not grieve it.

III. God assures us of his willingness to give us the Spirit, by appealing to our own parental love.

"If we, being evil, know how to give good gifts to our children, he will much more give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him."

The comparison is an overwhelming illustration of God's willingness to give us his Spirit. Observe,

1. The best earthly parents are evil, but God is good, unmingled goodness.

2. Earthly parents are limited in their means, but the residue of the Spirit is with God.

There is no increase by withholding, and no exhaustion by pouring out the Spirit.

3. In the light of this text, there is a throbbing ever-present witness for God in every parent's heart.

The hardened wretch may have suppressed it, but such are exceptions.

But while our hearts are flesh, our natures sympathetic, and while humanity throbs in our veins, we have a pledge of the divine tenderness.

It is to us as the bow in the cloud to Noah.

The bow was not the cause, but the sign of God's promise; and so parental tenderness is not the cause, but the sign that God is still gracious.

Summons up all the better feelings of your nature, and with humanity throbbing high, go to God and ask him for the Holy Spirit.

We may not realize the depth and strength of parental sympathy under ordinary influences, but let something special wake it up, and then measure it if you can.

But more than all this is God's parental love.

REMARKS.

1. In the light of this subject, we may discover the path of duty, and of religious success.

We are no better than we are, because we have had no more of the Holy Spirit than we have.

We have done no more good than we have, for the same reason.

Would we now become better and more useful, begin by asking God for the Holy Spirit.

Would we see a revival, commence the effort for one, by asking God for the Holy Spirit.

2. The whole subject of asking God for the Spirit, is enforced by the highest considerations that can be addressed to humanity.

The Spirit is absolutely essential to salvation. "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his."

The time in which God offers us his Spirit is limited and uncertain.

"My Spirit shall not always strive with man."

It has strove with every one of us, but will not always strive.

Think of that morally dark day, when the Spirit will move your heart no more.

"The Spirit calls to-day,
Yield to its power,
O grieve it not away.
'Tis mercy's hour."

KEEPING THE HEART.

"Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life."—
PROV. IV. 23.

The term heart, is sometimes used to denote different faculties of the mind, and sometimes to denote the whole mind.

The affections are often meant by the heart.

In the text I understand heart to denote the whole mind, with all its powers and susceptibilities.

The whole needs keeping.

Three points demand special attention.

I. IN WHAT SENSE ARE WE REQUIRED TO KEEP OUR HEARTS?

To keep the heart, is to control the mind and hold it subject to the law of right.

1. We should keep our hearts, by keeping our understandings.

The term heart is often used to denote the understanding, and intelligence.

"Because that when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened." Rom. i. 21.

"And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind." Verse 28.

Had they kept their hearts, by retaining God in their knowledge, their foolish heart would not have been darkened.

It is our duty to cultivate our minds and search after truth, and the knowledge of God.

2. We should keep our hearts by keeping our imaginations.

Imagination is that faculty of the mind which conceives and forms ideas ; or it is an idea or conception.

These ideas may be real or unreal, true or false, pure or impure.

"And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." Gen. vi. 5.

We should keep our imaginations and watch every thought, and not allow vain thoughts to lodge within us.

3. We should keep our hearts by keeping our motives.

A motive is the mind's reason for its action, and is found in the end the mind seeks to secure.

"The light of the body is the eye ; if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness." Matt. vi. 22, 23.

The eye is used to denote the intention.

We should watch our motives.

4. We should keep our hearts by keeping our consciences void of offence.

Conscience is that which condemns us when we do what we believe to be wrong.

"If our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things." 1 John iii. 20.

Conscience will be lost if we do not keep it.

5. We should keep our hearts by keeping our affections.

Love to God and man should be the fountain whence the stream of our actions should flow.

The world will steal our hearts if we do not keep them with all diligence.

II. THE WATCHFUL DILIGENCE WITH WHICH WE SHOULD KEEP OUR HEARTS.

Keep thy heart *with all diligence*.

In the use of all means, and with all care.

1. In all the vicissitudes of human life.

In prosperity and in adversity.

In riches and in poverty.

In joy and in sorrow.

In pleasure and in suffering.

2. In all places.

In the family and in public.

In the church and in the world.

In company and in secret.

3. At all times.

In childhood, in youth, in manhood, and in old age.

Every moment.

4. In the use of all possible means.

With intensity of solicitude.

With sleepless watchfulness.

With determined energy.

With every possible assistance.

In the name and with the help of God.

III. THE IMPORTANT REASON FOR THUS KEEPING THE HEART.

"Out of it are the issues of life."

It is an allusion to the circulation of blood, which is sent out from the heart.

The heart is thus a fit emblem of our moral vitality.

As natural life issues from the heart, so moral life issues from the action of the mind.

The heart is represented as a fountain, whence the current of life flows.

By the issues or streams of life, the conduct or manner of living is meant.

The heart is the fountain, our life is the stream.

We should keep the heart with all diligence.

1. All practical evil flows from the heart, the fountain of action.

"Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies." Matt. xv. 19.

2. All practical virtue flows from the heart, the fountain.

"A good man, out of the good treasury of his heart, bringeth forth that which is good." Luke vi. 45.

3. The joys and sorrows of life flow mainly from the heart.

If the heart be kept pure, life will be a stream of joy.

4. The stream of life, which flows from the heart, will end in future happiness or misery, as is its character.

Life is a stream which bears its own fountain onward as it flows, and will carry us to heaven or hell.

REMARKS.

How wonderful that men are so neglectful of their hearts.

It is their only interest worth keeping.

Yet it is neglected more than any other interest.

Their bodily health is cared for.

Their property is cared for.

There personal appearance.

Their hearts alone are neglected.

PREPARATION FOR THE LORD'S SUPPER.

"But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body." 1 Cor. xi. 28, 29.

The sacrament of the Lord's Supper is the subject of which Paul is treating in this text.

There were great disorders in the church at Corinth, which he was reproving and laboring to correct.

The text treats mainly of the manner of attending to this solemn ordinance.

It also glances at the consequences of attending to it improperly.

In the short discourse I am about to deliver, I shall confine myself to the self examination required, preparatory for the sacrament.

I. THE NATURE AND EXTENT OF THIS SELF EXAMINATION.

To examine, is to inspect with care, to search into.

Observe, it is *himself*, which a man is to examine, not his neighbors.

This examination should be close and thorough, and should embrace the following points.

1. We should examine our conduct, and scrutinize our every action.

Has our actions upon their face, been conformed to the Gospel?

Has our conduct in our families been truly christian?

With our brethren, have we at all times acted the part of a brother?

Towards the church, have we at all times acted as becometh a member of the body?

Before the world, have we lived christian lives, and has our conduct done honor to the cause of God?

Has our deal always been honest and honorable?

2. We should examine our words, and see if they have been such as becometh the Gospel.

Have our words always been seasoned with grace?

Have we spoken no evil, and breathed no slander?

Have we not played the part of a whisperer?

3. We should examine our motives.

A motive is the reason which the mind has for its action.

What then has been our motives in all we have done?

A right thing is often done from an unworthy motive.

Have our motives been to glorify God and benefit man?

4. We should examine our feelings.

There may be much rancor and bitter feeling within, of which there is no external visible sign.

We should probe deep into the heart and see what lies concealed there.

II. THE OBJECT OF THIS SELF EXAMINATION AS A PREPARATION FOR THE SACRAMENT.

It is for the purpose of ascertaining if we have the proper qualifications of communicants.

The qualifications are such as constitute christian character.

We may properly ask ourselves, in the light of our examination,

Am I a christian ?

Do I believe in Jesus Christ as the great sacrifice for sin ?

Am I conscious of his favor ?

Do I now entertain an honest purpose to forsake every sin, and to live a christian life ?

Can I receive the sacrament as an emblem of Christ's body and blood, relying upon the merits of his death for salvation ?

III. THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS SELF EXAMINATION.

1. It is important to know our standing before God on so solemn an occasion as the sacrament.

It is well to pause in life at any time, and take an account of our standing before God ; how much more before approaching the Lord's table.

2. Self examination will tend to produce a favorable state of mind to receive the sacrament.

It will produce humility.

It will produce solemnity of mind.

It will show us the necessity of resorting to the blood of Christ, as our only cure for sin.

3. Self examination alone can secure us against eating and drinking unworthily.

To eat and drink unworthily, is to eat and drink damnation to ourselves.

Unworthily, here means, improperly, without proper qualification.

"Not discerning the Lord's body," means without regarding the bread and wine as the emblem of the Lord's body and blood.

To eat and drink as at an ordinary meal, is not to discern the Lord's body. This was the fault of the Corinthians.

To drink damnation, means to incur damnation, that is guilt, punishment.

Damnation means condemnation, judgment, or punishment.

It does not here mean eternal punishment.

The Corinthians appear to have been punished by bodily disease.

How important then is it to come to the Sacrament with proper views and feelings.

Let us, each of us, and all of us, examine ourselves, and so let us eat and drink.

There are considerations which should soften and move every heart.

The occasion reminds us of the great gift of God the Father.

It reminds us of the agony and dying love of the Redeemer.

We should remember that these means of grace will soon be done with us.

They may be cut short very unexpectedly.

Those of us who may join in the communion, may never all commune together again on earth.

The hand of Providence may point our way in separate paths.

Death may remove some of us before another communion season.

Are we prepared to meet each other at the bar of God.

If we knew our next meeting would be there, should we not have some matters to adjust before parting on this occasion?

Let us examine ourselves and see how we stand with God and each other.

We are not to stay away because we consider some one else unworthy; the question is, are we worthy?

SEEKING THE PROSPERITY OF THE CHURCH.

"Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces."—PSALM CXXII. 7.

This is a form of prayer invoking God's blessing upon Jerusalem.

The Psalmist gives two important reasons for seeking the peace and prosperity of Jerusalem.

1. "For my brethren and companions' sake, I will say, peace be within thee."

2. "Because of the house of the Lord our God I will seek thy good."

Jerusalem was strikingly emblematic of the gospel Church, and much said of her, was prophetic of Gospel times and Gospel blessings.

What is here enjoined in regard to Jerusalem, is a solemn duty binding upon all members of a christian church.

Our prayer should be, "Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces."

I. LET US CONSIDER THE BLESSING HERE PRAYED FOR.

The blessing is two-fold, peace and prosperity.

"Peace be within thy walls."

This peace is the opposite of strife, contentions, and divisions.

This peace should reign within the Church, "within thy walls."

The very idea of Christian fellowship, supposes union.

This peace reigning within the Church, places her in peaceful and advantageous relations to the world.

She breathes nothing but peace toward the world.

She has influence and power for good that she may benefit the world.

A contentious divided church can not be prosperous.

"Prosperity within thy palaces."

Prosperity denotes increase, success. Prosperity is the attainment of the principal end sought.

The Church enjoys prosperity when she secures the results for which she exists.

The visible signs of prosperity may be noted as follows :

1. Internal peace and love.

When the prayer of Christ is realized, "That they all may be one ; as thou, Father, art in me and I in thee, that they also may be one in us ; that the world may believe thou hast sent me." John xvii. 21.

2. When the ordinances are all maintained, attended and appreciated.

The worship of God well attended.

All its branches well sustained, preaching, praying, and singing.

The sacraments attended to with regularity, solemnity, and profit.

3. When the children of the Church are seen coming to her support, following the example of pious parents.

As a means to this, when the Sunday School is full and flourishing.

4. When the membership of the Church generally are growing in knowledge and holiness.

Their minds more enlightened.

Their hearts more entirely consecrated to God, and the life more evenly conformed to the Gospel.

5. When sinners feel the power of truth and submit to its claims.

II. THE MEANS OF SEEKING THE PROSPERITY OF THE CHURCH.

1. We must pray for the peace and prosperity of the Church.

Prayer is God's appointed means.

Let the language of the heart be, "may peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces."

Cultivate the habit and spirit of earnest prayer for the Church.

2. We must labor for the prosperity of the Church.

Live such a life as will honor her, and recommend her to the world around.

Support the Church by your presence and voice at all of her meetings.

Support the Church by all reasonable material aid.

By pleading her cause.

Let all this be done with deep feeling and earnestness.

When we feel as did the Psalmist, we may look for prosperity to come. The Psalmist said,

"Thou shalt arise and have mercy upon Zion ; for the time to favor her, yea the set time is come. For thy servants take pleasure in her stones, and favor the dust thereof." Psalm cii. 13, 14.

REMARKS.

1. The state of the Church and state of things around us, call loudly for a practical application of this subject.

There is a visible want of prosperity in the Church.

Her institutions are neglected.

Too few come to her solemn feasts.

Many of her friends have gone away, and are as sheep scattered.

Let me exhort the wanderers from the ways of Zion to take up the lamentation of the captive Israelites and return.

“ When we our weary limbs to rest,
 Sat down by proud Euphrates’ stream,
 We wept,” &c.

2. The interests involved in the prosperity of the Church, are too great to be overlooked or neglected.

The Church has been placed here by God, to reflect his glory.

This she will do as she is prosperous and full of life and light.

The Church is God’s instrumentality for good in the world.

By it and through it God works to save the world.

The Church is the light of the world through which God shines.

If the Church was blotted from the earth, darkness and death would reign.

We should then rally to sustain the Church as we prize all these interests.

3. Dark as the prospect may appear, there is ground to hope, encouragement to pray and labor.

It was dark when Moses saw the burning bush.

It was dark when Elijah dwelt in the wilderness and was fed by ravens.

It was dark when Christ lay in the tomb.

It was dark when Luther first looked out from his monastery upon the corruptions of the Romish Church.

So God can give prosperity to his Church now, if we will use the means.

THEME OF APOSTOLIC PREACHING.

BY THE REV. R. DONKERSLEY.

“ We preach Christ.”—1 COR. I. 23.

PROEM. The biography of the world does not present before us a man of greater singleness of purpose, of more courageous spirit, of more steady, fervid, glowing zeal, or of more successful efforts to bless and save mankind, than is presented before us in the glorious career of the great apostle of the Gentiles.

While but an awakened sinner—ere yet he had been made a partaker of renewing grace—we hear this noble specimen of true

manhood inquiring, "Lord what wilt thou have me to do?" (Acts ix. 6.) No sooner is it made known unto him that he must preach that faith, which in the days of his ignorance he labored to destroy, than, he "confers not with flesh and blood," but immediately goes forth, "preaching among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ."

The prospect of bonds, scourgings, imprisonments, or even death itself, in its most terrible form, intimidate him not. We have all read his heroic reply to Agabus and other of the disciples, when they would dissuade him from his purpose of adventuring himself into Jerusalem, as an apostle of the despised Nazarene. "What mean ye to weep and to break mine heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus." Acts xxi. 13.

Were other professed religious teachers plunging into speculative philosophy, or meddling with science, falsely so called, here he might triumphantly have measured intellectual strength or scholastic prowess with the foremost of them. But such ambition only sufficed to inkindle his pious indignation, and excite his holy contempt, since he had boldly determined not to know anything among men, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. (1 Cor. ii. 2.)

No man was better qualified than the accomplished pupil of the learned Gamalael to meet the demand of the Jews for a sign, or of the Greeks for wisdom. But such mental effort—in their acceptance of those terms—came not within the province of the grand mission to which St. Paul had consecrated his transcendent intellectual powers. Hence it was that his whole life's service—from the day of his conversion until the hour when he had gloriously finished his course—was one continuous practical exemplification of his averment:—"We preach Christ."

TOPIC :—PREACHING CHRIST.

By the word Christ, as it occurs in the Scripture before us, we understand his character and his religion, rather than his person. Among the Jews, nothing was more common than to give the name of a religious teacher to the system of truths which he taught. When it is said of the Jews, "They have Moses and the prophets," no one supposes that at this time Moses was actually residing in person among them; but, simply, that they had his law and his religion. "I came not to destroy the law and the

prophets," said our Saviour. No one understands him here as saying that he had not come to slay men who had been in their graves some hundreds of years. He would simply teach us that his doctrines were suited to confirm, not to invalidate the writings of those holy men of old. Whatever then may be the particular topic of pulpit discussion, if it keep distinctly before the mind of the hearer the great Author of the Christian system, and the grand purpose of his advent into our world, we may affirm with St. Paul :—" We Preach CHRIST."

WE PREACH THE WHOLE OF CHRIST.

We preach Christ as God incarnate. We see united in Him the two distinct natures of God and man. "Great is the mystery of godliness," &c. (1 Tim. iii. 16.) "A mystery." Admitted. Answered. Relation of the human will to bodily action. Mind acting on mind, etc., etc. This is a doctrine of pure revelation. Revelation does not contradict reason, but it does often rise far above reason. "Reason itself never appears more reasonable than when it ceases to reason upon those things which are above reason."

We preach an official Christ. The anointed of God. (Isa. lxi. 1.) Anointed Prophet. (Acts iii. 22.) Priest. (Heb. ii. 17 : iii. 1 : iv. 14, 15 : v.) King. (1 Tim. i. 17 : vi. 14, 15.)

We preach Christ as the world's Redeemer. (Isa. liii.) "Christ hath redeemed us from," &c. (Gal. iii. 13.) "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed," &c. (1 Peter i. 18.)

As our Mediator before the throne of God. "Wherefore he is able also," &c. (Heb. vii. 25.) "We have an advocate with the Father," &c. (John ii. 1, 2.)

As the Author of the general resurrection of the dead. "The hour is coming," &c. (John v. 28, 29.) "I am the resurrection," &c. (John xi. 25.)

As the final Judge of all mankind. "For the Father judgeth no man," &c. (John v. 22. Rom. xiv. 10. 2 Cor. v. 10.)

As the awarder of the joys of heaven to the righteous, and of the torments of hell to the wicked. (Matt. xxv. 31-46.)

WE PREACH CHRIST FOR ALL.

By his vicarious death, Christ has made provision for the conditional salvation of all men. (Isa. liii. 6. John iii. 16. 1 John ii. 1, 2.)

"Thy undistinguishing regard
Was cast on Adam's fallen race,
For all thou hast in Christ prepared,
Sufficient, sovereign, saving grace."

The Inspired Record offers Christ to all. "Look unto me." (Isa. xlv. 22. Matt. xxviii. 18, 20. Mark xvi. 15, 16.

"O for a trumpet voice,
On all the world to call," &c.

Christ is adapted to all. No matter what diversity of moral character our depraved world may present, in Him is a suitability to every case.

He is adequate to save all. "Able also to save them unto," &c. (Heb. vii. 25) Take the most abandoned sinner this world can furnish, and let such a character but comply with Gospel requisitions and he shall feel that Christ is "mighty to save."

"Lord, I believe we sinners more
Than sands upon the ocean shore,
Thou hast for all a ransom paid,
For all a full atonement made."

WE PREACH CHRIST ONLY AND ALWAYS.

Christ is our only theme. We have neither time nor inclination for any other theme. "God forbid that I should glory," &c. (Gal. vi 14) The preaching of no other theme will achieve our grand aim—the salvation of men. Of the Gospel of Christ, only, can it be said, "It is the power of God," &c. (Rom. i. 16.) "There is none other name under heaven," &c. (Acts iv. 12) Other topics, and other branches of knowledge may be admitted into the pulpit, just so far as they contribute to a more lucid, and effective manner of setting forth of the great theme of pulpit discourse, but not to the exclusion of Christ therefrom.

We preach Christ as our constant theme. However frequently we may enter the sacred desk, we can not, we may not, we dare not discourse upon any other theme while there, than that of a crucified Redeemer, a risen Saviour, a glorious Deliverer. 1 Cor. xv. 1-4. ii. 2.

BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION.

DEFINITION OF SINGLE WORDS.

Nothing can be more important than a correct definition of single words. For want of this, many false interpretations have been perpetrated, and great violence done to the meaning of authors. As most words have more meanings than one, the first thing to be done, in a given case, is to determine which of the several meanings the word has in the place under consideration. It will not do to take it for granted that a word has a certain meaning in a given place, because we can prove that it has that meaning in some other place, or in even many other places. Such assumptions and modes of reasoning are a fruitful source of error, and mislead many. Take as an illustration the word *spirit*, as derived from the Greek word *pneuma*. This word signifies wind, air in motion, breath, disposition or temper of mind ; the soul or spiritual part of man ; angel or any disembodied being ; the Divine nature or God. Quote the words of James to a materialist, which say, "the body without the spirit is dead," (James ii. 26) and he will tell you that he finds that the word spirit means air, wind, breath, and of course the body is dead without air or breath. Quote the miracle of Christ to a disbeliever in devils, where he cast an unclean spirit out of a man, (Mark i. 23-26) and he will tell you that he finds that the word spirit means wind, air, breath, and that the man was sick, and had an offensive, foul breath, and that Christ cured him, and gave him a pure unoffensive breath. Quote to a Pantheist, who believes the universe to be God, the words of Christ, "God is a spirit," (John iv. 24) and he will tell you, that is just his view. He finds that the word spirit means air, wind, which is not only an essential, but one of the active and vital elements of the universe, and that it is very common to name a part, or most essential part for the whole of a thing.

Such methods of interpretation make jargon of language, and nonsense of well written documents.

The only method of avoiding this confusion, is to classify the meanings of words, and to assign to words in the different rela-

tions in which they are found, that meaning which will make sense, good sense, and a sense in accordance with the connection and general subject treated. When it is said that "God is a spirit," no other idea can be attached to the word, spirit, than that God is incorporeal, immaterial, without body or parts; that he is invisible, an intelligent, everywhere, active power. All the manifestations of God conspire to give this sense to the word, for he has left the impress of his attributes upon the works of his hand. In Matt. xxviii. 19, we have the formula of baptism, "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Here the word rendered Ghost, is the same as spirit in the Greek, *pneuma*, and can mean nothing but that divine personality and active power called the Holy Spirit. To translate it wind, air, breath, life, or disposition, would not only be at war with common sense, but with the general use of the term in the New Testament. In Matt. xxvi. 41, Christ says to his sleepy disciples, "the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." To understand God, or the Holy Ghost by the word spirit in this text, would be worse than folly. It can mean nothing more than the mind or disposition of the disciples. Their purpose or intention was right, but their physical nature was too far exhausted to enable them to carry it out. So in Luke ix. 55, Christ says, "ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of." Here spirit must mean motive, disposition, or temper of mind. In John iii. 8, the word spirit has two distinct significations in the same text, "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the spirit." Here the word wind and spirit are translated from same word in the Greek, *pneuma*. It is determined in its sense by the word blow, *pneo* in the Greek, which signifies to blow, to breathe, to respire, and which is used in the New Testament only in connection with the wind. Also the sense is determined by the description. We hear it without seeing it, and it passes, we cannot tell whither. But to translate the word the same way in the second instance would be absurd. We cannot say, so is every one that is born of the wind, hence the word spirit in this case denotes that active renewing power called the Holy Spirit.

The Greek word *psukee*, translated soul, life, &c., will serve as

another illustration. This word occurs one hundred and three times in the New Testament, and is translated as follows : It is rendered soul fifty-eight times, life forty times, mind three times, heart once, and heartily once.

To render this word soul, and understand the immortal part by it, in a given text, because it has this sense in some other text, is absurd, no less than to understand it of the animal life, because it has this sense in some other text. "They are dead which sought the young child's life." (Matt. ii. 20.) Here the animal life is meant ; they wished to kill the child. "Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul." (Matt. x. 28.) Here soul cannot mean the animal life, for the reason that to kill the body is to destroy the animal life, while the soul is something that lives after the body is killed, something which those who kill the body cannot kill. It then must mean the immortal spirit of man.

But while the word *psukee* is translated life forty times out of one hundred and three instances of its use, there is another Greek word which occurs one hundred and forty times in the New Testament and is translated life in every case save one, and in that it is rendered lifetime. This word is "Zoeë," which most commonly means spiritual life, or eternal life. It has eternal and everlasting associated with it in thirty-nine texts, and is used in such other texts as the following : "In him was life," (John i. 4) "It is better for thee to enter into life." (Matt. xviii. 8) "He that believeth not the Son shall not see life." (John i. 36) "Unto the resurrection of life." (John v. 29) "I am the bread of life." (John vi 35) "Ye have no life in you." (Verse 53) "That mortality might be swallowed up of life." (2 Cor. v. 4.)

These explanations are not given to establish any particular doctrine, but simply to show the importance of careful and correct Biblical Interpretation, so far as the definition of single words is concerned. How absurd would it be to assume that because the word life, means mere animal vitality in some particular texts, that it therefore always has this sense, or even that it has this sense in any other particular text. So on the other hand, it would be absurd to assume that the word life means eternal blessedness in any given text, because it has this sense in many other texts. The word in the New Testament is derived from two

words in the Greek, of general different significations, yet sometimes used to signify the same thing. Also the English word *life*, by which "psukee" is often translated, and "Zoeë" always, has various meanings. Webster gives it no less than twenty-six. How necessary is it then to understand the general meaning of words, and the particular meaning of each word, in each place, or in each relation where it is found? Without this we are liable to run into the greatest errors in Biblical Interpretation. We have illustrated by particular words, which we have selected on account of their importance, and not because they are peculiar in having different meanings ; the same is true of nearly all words.

A HINT TO MINISTERS.

Greatness and Goodness.—Would you be a useful minister, strive rather to be *good* than *great*. Keep down great I, for he will be found a troublesome guest, and one that will throw an insurmountable barrier in the way of yourself, and your usefulness to the souls of your fellow-men. The inquiry is often made, why am I not more useful? May it not be that *self* has too much to do in all that is done for Christ? Is he not often, first in thy study, in the choice of a text, in the structure of thy thoughts, in the pastoral visit, in the sacred desk, and in all thy communications with thy fellow-men. There is an attempt to do and be something, which smells so rank of self, as to put thy Saviour in the shade, and thereby to destroy thy usefulness. Self should be in the dust, and Christ should be "all in all."

Dr. Payson seems to have touched the string, when writing to a young clergyman. He says :—"Some time since, I took up a little work purporting to be the lives of sundry characters, as related by themselves. Two of those characters agreed in saying, that they were never happy until they had ceased striving to be great men. This remark struck me, as you know the most simple remarks will strike us when heaven pleases. It occurred to me at once, that most of my sorrows and sufferings were occasioned by an unwillingness to be the nothing which I am, and by

consequent struggles to be something. I saw if I would but cease struggling, and consent to be anything or nothing, just as God pleases, I might be happy ; you will think it strange that I mention this as a new discovery. In one sense, it was not new--- I have known it for years. But I now saw it in a new light. My heart saw it, and consented to it ; and I am comparatively happy. My dear brother, if you can give up all desire to be great, and feel heartily willing to be nothing, you will be happy too."

Ah ! Is there not experience touched here that will be profitable to thyself if heartily consented to, and practised ? It was a lovely trait in thy Saviour that "he went about doing good." Let then your highest aim be, to imitate him who lived thy example, as well as died thy sacrifice. Be *good* rather than *great*.—*Mess. of G. R. Church.*

PAUL'S DISINTERESTEDNESS.

The disinterested spirit of Paul did not appear only in his readiness to renounce every pecuniary claim. He was prepared and stood always ready to make a sacrifice of his ease, his health, his strength, his life, in prosecution of his high calling, and for the advancement of the spiritual welfare of those among whom he labored ; nor could their ingratitude and insensibility to his services cool the ardor of his generous determination to do them good : "I will very gladly spend and be spent for you ; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved." Nor was this disinterested benevolence confined to those who were Christians. If the maxim be just, "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh," then his unpremeditated reply to King Agrippa is a convincing proof of this. Struck with his fervent appeal to him, and with the character of his whole appearance and defence, the King could not refrain from exclaiming, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian."—"I would to God that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost and altogether such as I am, except these bonds." O how gladly would Paul have continued to wear "these bonds ;" how gladly would he have withdrawn his appeal to Cæsar, and consented to go up to

Jerusalem, and there be judged, provided he could have obtained but half his pious wish? My brethren, if that sentiment, instead of lying in this despised book, had occurred in a Greek tragedy or a Roman story, or had it proceeded from the mouth of a Socrates or a Cicero, instead of that of an apostle, it would have been quoted an hundred times in the writings of the age as an effusion of the sublimest and purest benevolence. But, alas! our wits have taste and feeling on every point but one.—*McCrie's Sermons on the Character of Paul.*

THE PASTOR.

O! If hereafter the eyes of many a pastor must look tremblingly upward, when the Chief Shepherd shall appear; will there then be no searchings of heart in some of those with whom appointments so responsible were vested? - - The candle was placed on the candlestick, but alas! no fire fell from heaven to kindle its flame, giving light to all around! He who had come, in profession, to serve the sanctuary, was one consecrated, in word only, to God; and the fire from heaven will descend on the altar of no unsanctified heart; the breath of the world is an atmosphere which, if it be admitted within, extinguishes the sacred ignition. - - -

Who shall attempt to tell all that the pastor's home often is, and always might be! Opportunities, privileges and responsibilities—bearing upon the personal destiny of others, meet in that calm centre with a power unequalled. When these are daily risen to and met in a strength divine, a light celestial, a love exhaustless and unwearied—because a love whose source is infinite and eternal,—who can estimate the bright results?

But the radiance rests not upon the pastor's home alone. Heavenly truth and love, with whatever elements of character, or position of circumstances combined, will be raised to an ascendancy over human hearts upon earth, and a kingdom in Heaven. "The Lord will create upon every dwelling place of Mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night, for upon all the glory shall be a defence."—*The Ministry of Life.*

SHORT SERMONS.

Short sermons are not only more acceptable, but almost always more useful than long ones. When Paul was "long preaching," it is quite probable that some others besides Eutychus fell into a deep sleep ; and preachers less eloquent than Paul are much more liable, by exercising their gift of continuance, to weary and worry their hearers to sleep. Some of the very shortest sermons have been the most effective. For example :

It is related of Dean Swift, that being called upon to preach a charity sermon, he delivered the following pithy and laconic discourse : "He that hath pity on the poor, lendeth to the Lord. My brethren, if you like the security down with your money." The security proved so acceptable that very large investments were diately made.

A still shorter sermon than this was preached by the eloquent Kirwan. He was pressed, while suffering from a severe cold, to preach in St. Peter's church, in Dublin, in behalf of orphan children in the parish schools. He tried to excuse himself, but at last yielded. The church was crowded to suffocation, and having given out his text, he merely pointed to the orphan children who filled the aisles, and said, "*There they are.*" It is said that the contribution which followed this brief discourse far exceeded the anticipations of those who engaged Kirwan's services on the occasion.

It would not answer to sermonize as briefly as Swift and Kirwan did in the instances above referred to, unless one could be sure also to equal them in manner. But there are almost no occasions on which a short sermon will not be much more profitable and effective than a long one.—*N. Y. Observer.*

DRIVE AND CLINCH.

The venerable Dr. Lyman Beecher once preached a sermon on infidelity. His divisions were simple put potent—First, I will drive the nail. Secondly, I will step round and clinch it. The division suggests a lesson to preachers. Some are forever driv-

ing the nail—discussing the subject—presenting it in new lights—turning it over and over—completely exhausting it—leaving the hearer no possible opportunity of exercising his own mind about it—in fine, perpetually hammering, as though the nail would not enter far enough, or would not stay when entered. But a shorter way to make the nail hold would be to step round and clinch it. Make a clinching application of the subject, when it has been sufficiently opened. If you drive the nail long after it has gone its whole length, all the fruit of your labor will be to bruise or split the wood, or perhaps drive the nail out on the other side. After the nail is fairly in, clinch it, and let it go. If it is a good nail it will hold. Some nails will not bear clinching—they break short off. It is poor argument that cannot be clinched. Have a good nail—drive it well—then clinch it.—*Reflector*.

IMPROVEMENT OF TIME.—Time is health or disease, wealth or poverty, knowledge or ignorance, virtue or vice, life or death, as it is improved or misimproved. The following rules for the improvement of time may be useful.

1. Spend time in nothing which will have to be repented of in time to come. To do to-day, what is wrong, and repent of it in the future, must be a double loss of time, and not to repent of it, will cause the loss of eternity.

2. Spend time in nothing, which, in the circumstances, will not be of some use to yourself or others. Why should time, of which we have so little, be thrown away?

3. Spend time in nothing upon which you cannot ask the blessing of God. That cannot ultimately prosper, which is unworthy of God's blessing.

4. Spend time in nothing upon which you will not be able to reflect with satisfaction in a dying hour. Why should you, in life, make your pillow hard and sad in death?

5. Spend time in nothing, engaged in which it would not be safe to be overtaken by death. Why should you expose yourself to such a fearful surprise?

JEHOVAH'S TRIUMPH.

PREACHED ON THANKSGIVING DAY, AUGUST 6TH, 1863.

"Sing ye to the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously."—Exo. xv. 21.

The history of which this text is a part, is remarkable and deeply interesting.

The Israelites were held in cruel bondage, and were delivered by the interposition of God.

Human means were employed, Moses was prepared and sent as their deliverer, but God was the moving and efficient cause.

The immediate event which gave rise to the song of triumph, was a stupendous miracle.

At the lifting up of the rod of Moses the sea divided, and the Israelites passed through; and the Egyptians attempted to follow, when, at the lifting up of the same rod, the waters returned and overwhelmed them.

Then Moses and the children of Israel sang a song of triumph to God, and Miriam went forth with all the women, and responded to the host of men singers, saying, "Sing ye to the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously."

I propose to discuss briefly, two propositions, namely, God has triumphed, no less in our recent victories than he did at the Red Sea, and that this triumph, no less than that, demands a grateful acknowledgement.

I. GOD HAS TRIUMPHED, NO LESS IN OUR RECENT VICTORIES THAN AT THE RED SEA.

The truth of this proposition will appear from the following considerations.

1. God governs the world, and disposes of the destinies of men and nations, now, no less than he did then.

No visible miracles are now wrought, no uplifted wonder-working rod divides the waters, but God governs none the less for this.

The ends are reached without visible miracles.

God did not always employ miracles in the age of miracles, and can now govern without miracles.

He employed a rumor to turn away a most powerful king with his army. Isa. xxxvii. 7.

God has no prophets now to tell us what he is about to do, but he does none the less.

With this view agrees the whole tenor of the Scriptures.

Have the promises and threatenings of God become invalid by his having withdrawn his governing power from the world.

"Lo I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." Matt. xxviii. 20.

This has not expired by limitation.

"Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows." Matt. x. 29-31.

If the little sparrow is noticed, and the hairs of individuals are numbered, nations cannot be overlooked.

"For the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish, yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted." Isa. lx. 12.

"Lo I will bring a nation upon you from far, O house of Israel, saith the Lord." Jer. v. 15.

"At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and pull down, and to destroy it; if that nation against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent me of the evil that I thought to do unto them. And at what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it; if it do evil in my sight, that it obey not my voice, then I will repent of the good, wherewith I said I would benefit them." Jer. xviii. 7-10.

These texts are sufficient to show that God deals with nations.

God is dealing with this nation, and the results achieved are his triumphs.

2. The triumph of right, and of the best interests of humanity, is always God's triumph.

No matter by what instrumentality it is achieved, God is always on the side of right and human weal.

God often turns wicked instrumentalities to the achievement of his designs.

God so used the wicked king of Assyria. See Isa. x. 5-7.

It has been so, in part at least, in this war; results are reached, not intended by the agencies engaged.

The war was entered upon with no purpose of overthrowing slavery.

The ends of justice and humanity are being achieved by the success of our arms, and that is God's triumph.

The rebellion was against the best government in the world.

The rebellion was instituted with the most wicked designs that can rankle in the heart of men or devils.

It was to perpetuate and extend human bondage.

Success against such designs is God's triumph indeed.

3. The circumstances under which these achievements have been secured, stamps the whole matter as God's triumph.

The rebellion was unexpected on the part of the loyal North.

It was long premeditated and carefully prepared for by the rebels.

They had means and an army before the North woke up to their danger, yet success has crowned the Northern army.

II. THESE TRIUMPHS DEMAND A GRATEFUL ACKNOWLEDGMENT, NO LESS THAN THE TRIUMPH AT THE RED SEA.

The principle of giving thanks to God for his triumphs, on our behalf, is the same now as then, binding upon all, in all ages, and through all time.

As we have no inspired prophets to speak for God, and appoint the time and manner, the Executive of the nation hath well spoken.

Such an acknowledgment of God as the Proclamation contains, is of itself important.

But we have mainly to deal with the reason upon which it rests.

These are the reasons.

1. It is through the favor of God that we have achieved all our success.

It is God who has turned away the bitterness of defeat, and given us the gladness of victory.

2. The great issue involved, comprehending the honor of God and the rights of humanity, renders success a cause of deep and loud thanksgiving.

Slavery is the real issue ; to perpetuate and extend slavery has the war of rebellion been waged.

There were more slaves in the land than were redeemed from

Egypt, by about one fourth ; so if slavery be overthrown, the triumph will be greater than at the Red Sea.

Greater in view of the numbers.

Greater in view of the more terrible character of American bondage.

But the issue reaches beyond the present limits of slavery ; shall it spread over, and rule and curse the continent ? is the question.

It includes unborn millions, in succession, so long as the living tide of humanity shall roll along the sands of time.

It is not confined to the present race of slaves and their descendants, it involves the rights of white men.

It involves the honor of God and the integrity of our holy religion. It involves the hope of the world.

3. Properly to acknowledge the hand of God in our success, is to secure the continued interposition of that hand in future and greater triumphs.

I thank God that such an acknowledgment of Him has been written by an executive hand, and filed in the archives of the nation.

It looks like a national return to divine allegiance.

If all had observed it, the future strife would have been between the rebels on one side, and us and God on the other.

But how few have really showed a willingness to acknowledge and thank God.

Still I hope for much from this day of thanksgiving.

Many devout hearts have been blended to-day, and uplifted to God in prayer, thanksgiving and praise.

May the offering be acceptable, and may God hear, and deliver and save the nation.

THE DAY OF SALVATION.

“ Behold now is the day of salvation.”—2 COR. VI. 2.

This verse is the proper close of the preceding chapter.

It is also the close of the argument which commences with the 18th verse. “ All things are of God, who hath reconciled us to

himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation."

To urge immediate acceptance of the offer of salvation, Paul quotes the words of Isaiah, Chap. xlix. 8.

"In an accepted time have I heard thee, and in the day of salvation have I helped thee."

Paul then applies the language of the prophet, by adding the words of the text ; "Behold now is the accepted time, behold now is the day of salvation."

A day of salvation supposes two things, viz. : an object presented, salvation ; and a time, limited and specified during which this object may be secured.

I. THE OBJECT PRESENTED, SALVATION.

1. Salvation implies loss, misery, ruin, from which salvation is a deliverance.

In a Gospel sense, salvation is a deliverance from sin, by Jesus Christ ; the sufferings and death of Christ being the procuring cause.

Salvation includes pardon, regeneration, adoption, sanctification, the resurrection of the body, and eternal blessedness in heaven.

In view of its entire extent, it is progressive, present and prospective.

2. Gospel salvation is freely offered to all mankind.

"Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

"If any man thirst let him come unto me and drink."

3. Salvation is now immediately available.

You need not wait an hour.

Sinners only rebel and sin against God, until they accept of salvation.

God's claims are now upon every sinner.

God commands and invites sinners now.

"All things are ready, come unto the marriage."

Every sinner might be saved this hour.

4. Salvation is all of Grace, and free in its terms.

No sinner deserves it, it is a free gift.

It is offered "without money and without price."

"Ask and it shall be given."

Asking is no price paid.

"He that believeth shall be saved."

Believing is not a price paid.

It is free, absolutely free.

"Come to the living waters, come!
Sinners obey your Maker's call;
Return, ye weary wanderers home,
And find my grace is free for all."

5. Salvation is full, complete in its provisions, equal to all the wants of humanity.

It is light to illuminate our darkness.

It brings purity and holiness to give us in place of sin and pollution.

It brings joy to expel our sorrow.

It brings immortality to swallow up our death in victory.

It brings glory to consume our shame, and to encircle our future eternal being with everlasting light and splendor.

II. THE TIME, DURING WHICH THIS GREAT OBJECT MAY BE SECURED.

"Now is the day of salvation."

This expression denotes the time during which salvation is freely offered, and may be secured.

1. The time of Messiah's mediatorial reign is the world's day of salvation.

It includes the whole Gospel period.

It will close when Christ shall leave his position as our intercessor and advocate with the Father, and come to judge the quick and dead.

"The Lord said unto my Lord, sit thou at my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool." Psal. cx. 1.

"Then cometh the end when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God." 1 Cor. xv. 24.

The world's day of salvation will close with the sounding of the last trumpet, the general resurrection, and the judgment.

I do not pretend to know how near or how remote that day may be, nor do I believe the time is known by any man, or class of men.

2. This day of salvation is available only during this life.

It closes with each person at death.

The Gospel with all of its appliances and instrumentalities, is adapted to this world.

Its invitations are all here.

Its ministers are here with their commission to all of this world.

Its conditions are all here, its faith and works lie this side of the grave.

There is not one promise in all the scriptures, which secures salvation in a future state, to such as do not secure it in this life.

REMARKS.

1. Salvation is now within the grasp of every one who hears me this day.

"Now is the day of salvation."

You have every necessary means of salvation.

You have the Scriptures to teach you.

You have the Gospel ministry to invite and persuade.

The Spirit moves you.

Christ intercedes for you.

God waits to be gracious, with salvation in his out-stretched hand.

If you are not saved in such circumstances, the fault is your own.

It is your fault that you are not now saved.

If you gather no blessings during this gracious day of salvation, you will be lost indeed when it is past.

You will see and feel your mistake, when you look back from the land of despair, to this land of hope and Gospel privileges.

The thought of enjoying a day of salvation, without improving it, is frightful.

2. All neglecters of their day of salvation, will find a time when it will be too late to improve it.

"Now is the day of salvation ;" not to-morrow, next week, or next year, but *now*.

Be persuaded to seize upon the golden moment before it be gone forever.

Your day of salvation is growing, with every heart-throb, shorter and shorter.

Life which bounds its period is short, and grows shorter with every rising and setting sun.

Life may be cut off in a moment, and close forever your day of grace.

"Great God on what a slender thread,
Hang everlasting things."

Pause, sinner, in your madness and folly, long enough to think of the object to be secured,—salvation.

Once lost it will be lost forever.

The day of salvation once closed will be closed forever ; it will dawn not again.

O sinner, improve this day of salvation now, while its light lingers upon your path, before its sun goes down in a night that will know no dawning.

THE CHRISTIAN RACE.

"Wherefore, seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us."—HEB. XIII. 1.

Wherefore, is equal to the expression, from what has been said. It refers to the preceding chapter.

The life of the Christian is compared to a race in which combatants run for a prize.

The text teaches us how to prepare ourselves to run well.

I. LET US CONSIDER THE LIFE OF THE CHRISTIAN AS A RACE.

1. Great effort is required in a race.

So great effort is demanded of us as Christians.

We are told to strive to enter in at the strait gate.

2. Great haste is required in a race.

Christians should run, for time is short ; we have not one moment to waste.

3. A race has a prize at the end for the successful party.

The Christian runs for a great reward.

4. The whole race must be run in order to win.

It will not avail to run ever so fast, if we do not run to the end.

II. LET US CONSIDER THE DIRECTIONS GIVEN IN ORDER TO RUN SUCCESSFULLY.

1. We must lay aside every weight.

Runners in the game races, divested themselves of all burdens.

So should Christians lay aside whatever would hinder their progress.

One tries to run with the world on his shoulders.

Another swells himself up with pride, and then tries to run.

Another runs with his mind filled with corrupt imaginations, that allures him to way-side objects.

Another tries to run without first subduing his unruly temper.

2. We must lay aside the sin which doth so easily beset us.

The sense appears to be, the sin to which we are most exposed.

These sins may be classified as follows :

Constitutional, for some are weak on one point and some on another.

Sins of habit, such as were most indulged in before conversion. They will attack us with force.

Sins of association, arising from our profession, business, associations, relations in life, or our condition as rich or poor.

Every man is supposed to have some weak point which needs guarding.

III. THE ENCOURAGEMENT GIVEN, OR THE STIMULUS APPLIED.

1. We have a race set before us to run.

Set before us, marked out.

The way is marked, the course of life, the labor of duty, is set before us in the word, and in pious examples.

The end is set before us, the mark at which we should aim, and the prize for which we should run.

2. We are compassed about with a cloud of witnesses.

The worthies mentioned in the preceding chapter, are represented as beholding our race.

The figure is bold and startling, Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, and all the worthies of past ages, are represented as surrounding us as a cloud to behold our struggle for life.

Angels too, may participate in the exciting view.

Runners in the game races were stimulated by the throng of spectators that looked on.

But God and angels and saints behold our race.

3. We run for an immortal prize ; they ran for a trifle.

The greatness of the prize ought to stimulate us to make every possible effort.

Think of eternal life as a prize ! as a prize to be won.

Think of heaven as a home to be reached beyond dangers, and storms, and toils !

Think of saints, the spirits of just men made perfect, of angels and God, as an association to be gained, a company to be joined.

What is there here that holds you spell-bound amid the shadowy scenes, and death-struggles of earth, while heaven invites with such charms.

A thousand pious foot-prints mark the course, and a thousand voices cry, " Arise and come away."

Behold how men run after the interests of this poor world ; the gold seeker, the honor seeker, and the pleasure seeker.

May we not inquire, each for himself,

" Shall aught beguile me on the road,
While I am walking back to God ?
Or can I love this earth so well,
As not to long with God to dwell ? "

Let us run the race set before us.

If the world calls to us, and would draw us from our course, do as did Pilgrim, put your fingers in your ears and run, crying, Life, Life, Life !

THE FRIENDSHIP OF THE WORLD LOST.

" For if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ."--GAL. I. 10.

Paul doubtless means that if he pleased wicked men devoted to this world and opposed to God, he would not be the servant of Christ.

It was impossible to please such, and be the servant of Christ at the same time.

What was then true, is still true of the servants of Christ, for two reasons :

1. The unrenewed heart is the same now that it was then.
2. The claims of christianity are the same now, and will offend wicked men, if pressed upon them.

Men often take offence at the simple truth of the Gospel.

The essential doctrine of the text may be stated as follows :

A FAITHFUL ADHERANCE TO THE PRINCIPLES AND DUTIES OF CHRISTIANITY, IS INCONSISTENT WITH THE FRIENDSHIP OF WORLDLY-MINDED AND WICKED MEN.

I shall attempt no more than a simple illustration of this proposition.

1. The Gospel tenders its relief to sinners only upon the ground that they are guilty, helpless and lost.

Its first demand is repentance.

It offers pardon only as a free gift, undeserved.

It charges all the wrong upon sinners.

It claims all the benevolence and saving power for God.

It offers salvation only as a free, unmerited gift.

It claims all the glory for God.

If the Gospel proposed a reconciliation upon the principle of mutual wrong and concession, sinners would accept.

It charges all the wrong upon sinners, demands all the concession of them, and requires them to receive salvation as a free unmerited gift, and give all the glory of it to God.

2. The Gospel attacks directly the pride of the human heart.

The Gospel must and will humble sinners before it saves them.

It presents its wisdom as opposed to the sinner's ignorance.

It reveals its power as opposed to the sinner's weakness.

It presents its holiness in contrast with the sinner's pollution.

It offers Christ's merits as the remedy for the sinner's guilt.

It debases the sinner and exalts Christ; it makes Christ all and the sinner nothing.

The Gospel leaves the sinner's pride nothing to feed upon, and it must die.

3. The Gospel attacks, and demands the entire surrender of the selfishness of the heart.

Instead of living for ourselves, it requires us to live for God and our common humanity.

Selfishness robs God, and neglects and wrongs humanity.

4. The Gospel attacks and demolishes caste.

It is a system of equal rights, of a common brotherhood.

Caste has its seat in the unrenewed heart.

The history of the world is the history of the development of caste.

It developed itself in the little family of Christ, and was rebuked by the Master.

"Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them, but among you it shall not be so." Matt. xx. 25-27.

5. The Gospel interdicts all wicked associations.

It does not require us to exclude ourselves from the world, but to be the light of the world.

It requires us to keep ourselves so distinct from the world as not to countenance any of its evil practices.

"Come out from among them, and be ye separate, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you." 2 Cor. vi. 17.

6. The Gospel holds men to a strict accountability.

It makes them feel that the eye of God is upon them.

It places the judgment before their eyes, and makes them feel their accountability to God.

This constant view will cause sinners to fall out with their sins, or with the preacher, who thus keeps the true Gospel blazing before their eyes, and burning on their consciences.

REMARKS.

1. Much of the Gospel that is preached in this age pleases men without making them better.

Tyrants, oppressors, bloody rebels, rum-sellers, slaveholders, and all the vain and proud of earth have their Gospel, which pleases them.

It cannot be the Gospel which Paul preached.

2. We may learn from these facts, why christianity has done and is doing so little for the world.

It is the world's christianity, in the hands of the world, formed and moulded and tempered by the world.

A Gospel tempered to please the world as it is, will never save men from the world.

3. The only remedy is to preach the simple truth, and the whole truth.

If the whole truth will not save men, a part will not.

God will have the heart, which he cannot have while any part of the truth is rejected, or any sin is persisted in, or any duty repudiated.

We are bound to insist upon the whole truth.

Bound to preach so as to make men fall out with their sins or with the preacher.

Had all the embodied christianity in the world, at all times, urged all its claims without abatement, and without compromise, it would have triumphed long ago.

It cannot be expected that all men will come up to this standard at once, but we should come up to it, as a means of bringing others to it.

Somebody must begin and lead the way in all reforms.

It is glorious to be right, but more glorious to be right with the few, or alone.

THE INHERITANCE OF THE SAINTS.

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you.”—1 PETER I. 3, 4.

This text is not a studied and carefully drawn statement of speculative truth, but is the out-gushing of a heart overflowing with gratitude to God for his mercy displayed in our salvation.

It commences with blessings pronounced upon the name of God, and ends with the blessings which God has bestowed upon us.

The text is a constellation of truths, in which, as in a cluster of stars, all are so bright and so blend, that no one can tell which shines the brightest.

There are so many important truths grouped together, that it is difficult to embody them in any very definite propositions.

I shall confine my exposition of the text to two very general statements of its contents.

I. THE TEXT CONTAINS A VERY INTERESTING ACCOUNT OF THE AUTHORSHIP OF SALVATION.

Salvation is interchangeably attributed to God and to Christ, which has furnished difficulty for some minds.

1. In the text it is attributed to the "God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again."

According to this, the source of salvation is the abundant mercy of God, and our Lord Jesus Christ, is the channel through which it comes to us.

Mercy is goodness extended to the guilty and ill deserving ; but it is extended to us through Christ.

With this agrees the general representations of the Gospel.

"God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son," &c. John iii. 16.

"God commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Rom. v. 8.

"Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God." 1 John iii. 1.

These texts all attribute our salvation to God the Father.

2. God, from the eternal fountain of his goodness, poured out our salvation through Jesus Christ, and in this sense Christ is its author.

He is the author of salvation in the sense of having secured it by his suffering and death for us, as our atoning sacrifice.

"Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered ; and being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him." Heb. v. 8, 9.

Here Christ is declared to be the author of salvation, but God gave him to be the author of salvation to us, and hence the language of the text, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."

God is to be blessed, that is praised, as the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, on account of the great blessings which he has bestowed upon us through Christ Jesus.

The titles here applied to our Saviour do not belong to him in his pre-existing nature, but in his incarnate and official character as Messiah and Saviour.

In this official relation, God is his God and Father, while he is our Lord Jesus Christ.

These titles are expressive of his office and work as our Saviour.

He is our Lord, *kurios*, which signifies Lord, God, Ruler, Master.

The word comes from *kuros*, authority, and denotes one who exercises authority.

All power in heaven and in earth was given into his hands at the resurrection.

In the exercise of this power, he reigns, and must reign until all enemies are put under his feet.

"God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things on earth, and things under the earth ; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father." Phil. ii. 9-11.

He is not only Lord, that is ruler, but he is our Lord Jesus Christ.

Our Lord, Ruler ; our Jesus, he who saves ; and our Christ, the anointed.

"Thou shalt call his name Jesus ; for he shall save his people from their sins." Matt. i. 21.

Christ, *Kristos*, in Greek, and Messiah in Hebrew, means anointed.

The word is used in the second Psalm where it is applied to Christ and is rendered *anointed*.

"The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord, and against his *anointed*."

The same word is applied to Christ in Daniel, and is rendered Messiah.

"Unto Messiah shall be seven weeks, and three score and two weeks, and after three score and two weeks, shall Messiah be cut off." Dan. ix. 25, 26.

These terms Messiah and Christ, are not so much names as titles of office.

Our Lord was called Messiah or Christ, that is anointed, in reference to the practice of anointing as an induction into office.

Kings, priests and prophets were anointed, and Christ combined all these in himself, and is our king, priest and prophet, and hence is called *the Anointed*.

He is our Saviour, the only "name under heaven given among

men, whereby we must be saved ; neither is there salvation in any other." Acts iv. 12.

Well then might Peter exclaim, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."

This I call an interesting account of the authorship of our salvation.

II. THE TEXT MAKES A VERY INTERESTING REVELATION OF THE NATURE AND SUBSTANCE OF SALVATION.

This great salvation commences here on earth, and has its consummation in heaven.

The text in brief describes the whole process.

1. The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ has begotten us again.

God created man in his own image, and as man has fallen and is now depraved, he has to be made over, made again.

The expression, "begotten again," denotes a second act, the act of renewing or regenerating, denoted by the words of Christ, "Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." John iii. 3.

2. We are begotten again to a lively hope.

A true christian hope is lively, active, and stimulates to all earnest efforts to obtain the object hoped for.

The word *Zoo*, here rendered lively, means living, or to live, or life itself.

Dr. McKnight translates it, a "living hope," and calls it a Hebrewism for "a hope of life."

Christians are begotten to a hope of life beyond death and the grave.

3. We are begotten again "to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven."

God having begotten us again, we become his children, and, consequently his heirs.

This inheritance embraces all the beatitudes of heaven, with all the abiding fullness of eternity.

It is "incorruptible," and cannot decay, decompose, or be consumed, and is absolutely immortal.

It is "undefiled," that is, pure, free from sin, and from unholy, polluted and polluting sinners.

It "fadeth not away." It is imperishable, subject to no decay, no diminution.

Its day will never go down, its seasons never decline, its flowers will never fade, its fountains will never run dry, its joys will never grow less, its glory will never grow dim.

This inheritance is reserved in heaven for us.

Our inheritance is not here in this land of sorrow and decay, withered by drouth, and blighted by frost, and beaten by storms.

It is reserved in heaven, prepared and ready and waiting our coming.

In heaven beyond the trials and storms of this life.

In heaven, beyond the ravage of thieves and robbers, beyond the destructions of war, and the overturn of revolutions.

In heaven, where God and Christ and angels dwell.

In heaven where many of our kindred and friends have gone.

In heaven near by, just over the river.

4. God has begotten us to all this by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

This is affirmed because the truth of the Gospel depends upon the fact of Christ's resurrection, from which it also derives its power to save. Had not Christ been raised from the dead, there would have been no general resurrection of the dead.

There would have been no intercession and of course no access in prayer.

There would have been no descent of the Holy Spirit, and consequently, no regeneration, no being begotten again.

In this sense the whole was accomplished by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

The resurrection of Christ was the consummation of the work of redemption, an event which terrified the foes of God and man, and shook hell to its centre, and filled earth and heaven with joy.

The resurrection of Christ was pregnant with life and immortality for every human being.

———"And did he rise?

Hear, O ye nations! hear it O ye dead!

He rose, he rose! he burst the bars of death.

The theme, the joy, how then shall man sustain?

O the burst gates! crushed sting! demolished throne!

Last gasp of vanquished death. Shout earth and heaven

This sum of good to man, whose nature then
 Took wing and with him mounted from the tomb.
 Then, then, I rose ; then first humanity
 Triumphant passed the crystal ports of light,
 ———and seized eternal youth."

REMARKS.

1. This subject should greatly strengthen and encourage christians, and stimulate to christian efforts.

" Born by a new, celestial birth,
 Why should we grovel here on earth."

This is not our home—our home is in heaven, our inheritance is there.

Struggle on, heaven is worth contending for.

When careworn and weary and sorrowful, look up and think of your inheritance.

2. The subject ought to arrest the attention of sinners, the devotees of this world.

It is time you were looking after this inheritance.

You will soon lose your hold upon this world ; it is slipping through your hands and passing away every day.

You are passing away, and your opportunity to secure this inheritance will soon be gone.

SOCIAL INFLUENCE.

BY REV. R. DONKERSLEY.

" For none of us liveth to himself."—ROM. XIV. 7.

PROEM. " Gather up my influence and bury it with me," exclaimed a youth, whose unforbidden spirit was sinking into the invisible world. Idle request. Had he begged his friends to bind the fierce winds, to chain the wild waves, to grasp the fierce lightnings, to make a path for the sand blast, his wish would have been more feasible, for past influence is unchangeable.

The sceptical thought that fell as a seed of evil from the lip, and grew in the heart of the listener into defiant infidelity ; the light word that pierced the spirit like a poisoned dart ; the angry glance which stirred the soul to anguish, and made the tears flow at the midnight hour, are alike beyond our reach.

The mind, thus wounded, sighs on, and after we are dead, the chords vibrate which our fingers had touched. The measure of that influence, for weal or woe, will be hidden, a terrible secret, until the day when the spirit blindly driven to despair and guilt, or blasted by sceptical thought, shall stand writhing and wretched to confront those by whom the offence came, and teach that influence is immortal and eternal."—Rev. Dr. Wise.

Such is, manifestly, the lesson inculcated by the apostle in the language before us, "For none of us liveth," &c.

TOPIC.—HUMAN INFLUENCE.

God has written upon the flowers that sweeten the air ; on the breeze that rocks the flowers upon the stem ; upon the rain-drop that refreshes the spring of moss that lifts its head in the desert ; upon every penciled shell that sleeps in the caverns of the deep, no less than upon the mighty sun which warms and cheers millions of creatures which live in its light ; upon all his works he has written, "None of us liveth unto himself."

The idea of a human being without influence is preposterous ! Why, if you stand still, shut you eyes, and fold your arms, you exert an influence by the position you occupy. A man cannot live without putting forth an influence over others.

The human family is a unit. "God hath of one blood," &c. Acts xvii. 26. Individual influence is felt throughout the family circle ; family influence sends forth its pulsations to the remotest corners of the community ; the influence of the community is felt over the whole nation ; the vibrations of the nation's influence shake the very globe itself. Mrs. West kissing her son Benjamin. "That kiss made me a painter." Mrs. Wesley, in the rectory of Epworth educating her sons for the great mission to which the providence and Spirit of God subsequently called them. How different might have been the character of that gifted man, Lord Byron, had his early years been spent under the tuition and training of Susannah Wesley, instead of being left to

the care of the feeble minded, and outrageously passionate Catharine Gordon. And how different would have been the influence of Byron's pen under this change of early circumstances.

There is the silent influence of example. This, in the case of every individual, is constantly operating for good or for evil, for weal or for woe. This influence is felt in the family circle, on the play ground among children and youth, in the social gathering, at the place of business or of amusement, in the place of public worship; everywhere it is going forth. The late Rev. John Angell James tells us that when he was quite young, the sight of a little bed-fellow on his knees just before retiring, influenced him, religiously, for life. The godly example of his own parents saved a certain young man from taking the final plunge into the vortex of infidelity, when all other means had failed. There is no person living who has not felt upon himself the influence of the good, or bad example of others. There is no person living who has not by his example influenced others.

Distinguished rank and position in society add greatly to our influence among mankind.

The statesman may be a Wilberforce or a Carolinean planter. As one or other of these characters he breaks asunder, or rivets still faster the chains of human bondage. The military chieftain may be a Washington, a Napoleon, a Wellington, or a Jeff. Davis. The preacher may be a Luther, a Calvin, a Wesley, a Whitfield, or a Theodore Parker. The author may be a Baxter, or a Voltaire, a Johnathan Edwards, or a Thomas Paine, a David Hume, or a Leigh Richmond, a Eugene Sue, or a Thomas Dick. The influence of books upon human character, and human destiny, is only less than omnipotent. Examples innumerable might here be cited.

There is the influence of wealth.

This talent possesses a mighty potency for good or evil, as it may be employed. What can it not do to bless or to curse its possessor, or others around whom it may throw its leviathan power? It can erect its breweries, its distilleries, and its rum shops; or, it can put in operation its agricultural pursuits, its useful manufactories, or its marts and ships of healthful commerce. It can foster ignorance and vice, or it can erect its institutions for intellectual and moral culture. It can start all the engines and artillery of infidelity, or it can pour the light of Christian

truth upon the nations of the earth, and diffuse the light of saving grace of Jesus o'er the world. It can give its possessor the miser's callous heart, and ultimately drag him down to the interminable depths of a miser's hell ; or, it can transform him into a Howard, a Gurney, or a Lawrence.

Influence is perpetuated.

"Scratch," says a certain author, "the green rind of a sapling, or wantonly twist it in the soil, and the scarred and crooked oak will tell of thee for centuries to come." Says Rev. Wm. Arthur, "A man may perpetuate his good or evil on earth long after he himself has passed away. You may at any time find a man sinning through the effects of the sin of some man of whom he never heard. Did you never mark, as you trace down the moving record of the falls and errors of Israel, that when Jereboam was laid in the grave, one man comes up who never saw Jereboam, yet sins after the sin of Jereboam ; then generation after generation, men who are separated from Jereboam by a vast lapse of years, and still the record goes on saying, "He sinned after the sin of Jereboam, who made Israel to sin." Centuries after the son of Nebat has gone to his grave, his sin is cankering the souls of a whole population. But take Paul. He has been away from the world for many ages, yet at this day his deeds and his words are light and brightness to the thousands and tens of thousands.

See still further illustration of perpetuated influence in the characters named in our third proposition. And what a mighty influence Robert Raikes is exerting to-day, for the welfare of millions. Mr. Raikes' influence must rather increase than decrease with the lapse of ages and centuries, down to the close of time.

CLOSING REMARKS.

Here, then, we discover a potent talent, which is not confided to the care of an exclusive few, but is entrusted to all.

How great the responsibility attached to such trust.

What are we doing with our influence to-day ? Is it on the side of right, or of wrong ? of virtue, or of vice ? Is it raising our fellow creatures to heaven, or is it sinking them into perdition ? Let us seriously ponder these pertinent interrogations.

BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION.

THE FIGURATIVE DISTINGUISHED FROM THE LITERAL.

There is perhaps no more fruitful source of false interpretation than a failure to distinguish between literal and figurative language.

The Scriptures abound in figurative language, and when the literal is interpreted as figurative, or the figurative as literal, the sense is perverted.

Persons who are more anxious to support an opinion, than to know the true sense of the Scriptures, often pervert them in this way. Texts which appear to contradict their views are called figures of speech, and are made to teach something else or nothing. Others construe figurative texts as literal, and thus demonstrate theories which had no existence in the mind of the Holy Spirit that inspired, or in the mind of the seer that wrote. Nothing appears too absurd to be advanced, when men have but the one end in view, that of maintaining an opinion. A religious teacher once, when pressed, went so far as to insist that every text in the Scriptures is literal, and should be interpreted as literal. A bystander asked him if he believed in Christ, in the true Gospel sense ; he replied that he did. Then said the other, addressing the people present, "we need this man very much in our neighborhood, and I propose that we retain him to build us a mill upon ; for Christ says, 'He that believeth on me as the Scriptures hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.' He says every text is literal, and that he believes, will he not make a good mill-seat?" The thing was so absurd as to be the end of the controversy on the subject.

But little less absurd are frequent interpretations resorted to, to turn away the force of plain literal texts, by calling them figurative. A single instance will be sufficient to illustrate the principle. In a volume of some pretensions, we find the following exposition. Heb. ix. 27, 28 : "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment, so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many ; and unto them that look for him, shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation."

This plain and literal text, teaches that men will be judged af-

ter death, and to avoid this, the writer referred to, gives it a highly figurative interpretation. In his view, it does not refer to death in any literal sense. By men in the text, the Jewish High Priest is meant; and by its being appointed unto men once to die, the appointment of an annual sacrifice to be offered by the high priest is meant, in which he died figuratively or symbolically in the sacrifice he offered; and by the judgment that follows death, the absolution is meant, which the high priest pronounced upon the people at the conclusion of the sacrifice. Such an interpreter may be distinguished for his inventive power, but it must be at the sacrifice of even apparent honesty. There is no more ground for understanding the text in a figurative sense, than there is for so understanding any other and every other text in the Bible. Using such a latitude of interpretation, anything and everything can be proved, and everything disproved at the same time.

It is then of the first importance to distinguish between literal and figurative language. To treat of the several figures of speech, and the laws that govern them, would better become a work on Rhetoric, than these brief articles on Biblical Interpretation, yet it is proper to note a few rules for distinguishing figurative from literal language.

1. The literal use of words is the general rule and habit; their figurative use is the exception; hence, words are to be understood in their literal sense, unless there be a necessity for understanding them figuratively. This necessity must be found in the subject or in the connection, and not in some preconceived opinion of our own. If we allow our opinions to drive us to figurative interpretations to make the Scriptures conform to them, then our opinions modify the Scriptures, rather than being based upon them. The fact that words are sometimes or frequently used in a figurative sense, will not justify a figurative construction in a given text, without a necessity for so understanding them. It is not enough that they will admit of such construction, the question is, does the context or the subject demand it to make truth and good sense? There is but little danger of construing figurative language as literal, generally it will not admit of it, without a violation of common sense. The text already quoted is an illustration. "Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water;"

again, "The water that I shall give him, shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." John iv. 14. Here water cannot be understood in its literal sense, and it appears impossible that any candid reader should not understand it figuratively, to denote the gracious influence of the Holy Spirit. The literal meaning of words then, is never to be departed from only when it is necessary, to prevent doing manifest violence to the subject and to common sense. Of this necessity we give the following examples.

(1.) It often occurs that what is affirmed cannot be literally true of the subject of which it is affirmed, compelling us to understand it figuratively. Christ says, "I am the true vine and my Father is the husbandman." Christ was not a vine, and the Father was not a husbandman, in any literal sense, the words are therefore used figuratively. "I am the living bread." But Christ was not bread, the word bread therefore is used figuratively. Of the literal bread, Christ said, "This is my body." But common sense, and every sense, says the bread broken and dispensed, was not his body, in a literal sense ; it is therefore a figurative expression, bread is only a figurative representation of the Redeemer's body.

(2.) Words are often shown to be figuratively used by some qualifying word or clause which expresses the literal sense, which the words do not express only figuratively. Eph. ii. 5. "Even when we were dead in sins hath he quickened us." If we understand the words *dead*, and *quicken*, in a literal sense, the text affirms that they had been literally dead, and had been raised from the dead. But the qualifying words, *in sins*, proves that the apostle affirmed not of the death of their bodies, but of their moral state, in which he uses death figuratively to represent the condition of sinners. The words, *in sins*, show literally, what kind of figurative death is intended.

(3.) Words are often proved to be used in a figurative sense, by the application of different words of widely different significations, to the same subject. No matter whether the subject is plain or obscure, known or unknown, the application of different words, of different literal significations to it, will prove that some of them are used figuratively. We may illustrate by the change

which takes place in becoming a Christian. Christians are said to be born again, to be converted from the error of their ways, to be quickened, to be created anew in Christ Jesus, to be renewed after the image of God. The same thing is meant in all these representations, and hence, some of them must be figurative representations. It appears that Nicodemus had not learned to distinguish between literal and figurative language, though a teacher in Israel, and hence he inquired with amazement, "how can a man be born when he is old?"

2. In construing words figuratively, we are never to lose sight of the literal idea intended to be communicated. Words are often figurative, but ideas never. Words are used to represent ideas, and however highly figurative the language may be, the idea represented is literal. Take the enigmatical address of Nathan to David as an illustration. 2 Sam. xii. 1-4. The literal idea shrouded in this ingenious and beautiful allegory is stated in the 9th verse: "Thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and hast taken his wife to be thy wife, and hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon." By not distinguishing between figurative language and the literal idea or subject represented, great violence has been done to the word, and great obscurity has been thrown over plainly stated truths. A few illustrations will be sufficient.

(1.) Heaven is represented by various and striking figures. Heaven is represented as a temple, a house with many mansions, a city which hath foundations, a better country, a place of day without night, light without sun, moon or candle, fruit-bearing trees, fountains of living water, a river of the water of life. Most or all of these may be highly figurative descriptions, yet it is only the description that is figurative, not the place described. There is a literal heaven, and there is one uniform literal thought which runs through all these figurative representations, and that is, happiness, heaven is therefore a place of happiness.

(2.) The punishment of the wicked is also described by various and very different expressions. It is a worm that dieth not, and fire that is not quenched. It consist of hell fire, fire and brimstone sending up the smoke of torment for ever and ever. It is outer darkness, where is wailing and gnashing of teeth. It is wrath, poured out without mixture into the cup of God's indigna-

tion. These expressions may be highly figurative, yet they all communicate one uniform idea, namely, that of suffering, and this is not a figurative, but a literal idea. The penal state of the wicked therefore will be a state of suffering.

3. The atonement of Christ is represented by a very great variety of expressions. He gave himself a ransom for us ; he gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity ; he died for us ; he tasted death for every man, he bore our sins in his own body on the tree. He has washed us from our sins in his own blood, and the saved have washed their robes and made them white in his blood. These expressions, however figurative some of them may be, communicate one literal idea, which is that of delivering us from our sins by expiation, consisting of a substitution of himself for sinners.

AN INDISPENSABLE QUALIFICATION.

Much has been thought and said and written on the subject of ministerial qualifications, and much that is true and important. It has been often shown that the times demand an educated ministry, a ministry full of knowledge and the light of truth, so transparent that it shines out on every side, and illumines every subject they touch. This is all true and important, but it has been so frequently dwelt upon that it has almost become common place. And it must be admitted, that ministers, very deficient in the natural sciences, and scholastic embellishments, have, in time past, been very successful in calling sinners to repentance ; yet this is no proof that education is not important, any more than it is an excuse for ignorance, on the part of those who have the means of acquiring knowledge. The fact however must be admitted, that some ministers have been successful in winning souls to Christ, with a very limited amount of scholastic education.

But there is another qualification to which we wish to call attention, which need not, may not, yea, cannot be dispensed with without impairing usefulness. It is deep, earnest piety, or in other words, communion with God, holiness. It is deep, earnest,

personal piety that gives weight to preaching. Without it, truthful words, well turned sentences, and eloquent sermons, fall powerless upon depraved hearts. Though a man preach like an angel, if he live like a sinner, his preaching will be powerless to save. Ministers should be holy. They should live in the atmosphere of divine influence ; they should maintain constant and deep communion with God, and should live so near to God, as to be able, like Abraham, to plead with God as a man pleadeth with his friend. The minister's moral power depends upon his holiness. He may have influence without it ; he may have popularity, and draw a crowd after him, and even enlighten their minds and modify their opinions, but the power to reach their consciences and make them feel their sins and the claim of God's law, is the power of holiness. This is the indispensable qualification of a good and successful preacher.

1. There can be no excuse for a want of this needful element, it is within the reach of every one. All men have not the same opportunity to obtain scholastic qualifications, but the source of holiness is open to all, and earnest prayer will bring the blessing. We sometimes talk to ministers on mental culture, and suggest plans for reading and study, but they often reply that they have not a library and are not able to procure one, that they find but little time to devote to reading and mental improvement, and that they had no early advantages, and hence must pursue a cloudy journey. We will not reply to this here, as a fact, but say that all the light and fire and power of holiness is within the grasp of every one. No man will dare to say he has not as benign a throne of grace as any one. No one will dare say that he cannot find time to pray. When a minister becomes so involved in the work of his calling, and is so pressed with cares, that he has not time to pray, he had better hold up, and take breath, and start again on a plan that will spend a little more breath in prayer.

2. Holiness is a ministerial qualification for which there is no substitute. No amount of talent or tact, can supply the want of a pure heart. No degree of learning, no amount of literary knowledge, can constitute a substitute for holiness. Talent, tact and learning are all good and useful, but they fully accomplish their ends, and do the work of God, only when they are wielded by a

holy heart, a sanctified will, a soul wholly consecrated to God. Ministers may not then excuse the want of holiness, on the ground that they possess other rare qualities, or on the ground that they have been ever so diligent in the cultivation of every other power and gift. Ministers need to cultivate every faculty, and seize upon every help within their reach, and then, to fill their measure, must crown the whole with holiness, and vitalize the whole with the constant indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Here will be found the secret of ministerial power, and let all who covet earnestly the best gifts, come to the open fountain of full Gospel salvation, and drink of it, drink deeply, lave in it and be clean.

A PASTOR'S REPUTATION.

A minister's character is the lock of his strength ; and if once this is sacrificed, he is, like poor Sampson, shorn of his hair, a poor, feeble, faltering creature, the pity of his friends, and the derision of his enemies. I would not have bad ministers screened, nor would I have good ones maligned. When a preacher of righteousness has stood in the way of sinners, and walked in the counsel of the ungodly, he should never again open his lips in the great congregation, until his repentance is as notorious as his sin. But while his character is unsullied, his friends should preserve it with as much care against the tongue of the slanderer, as they would his life against the hand of the assassin. When I consider the restless malignity of the great enemy of God and holiness, and add to this his subtlety and craft ; when I consider how much his malice would be gratified, and his schemes prompted, by blackening the character of the ministers of the gospel ; when I consider what a multitude of creatures there are who are his vassals, and under his influence creatures so destitute of moral principle, and so filled with venomous spite against religion, as to be prepared to go any length in maligning the righteous, and especially their ministers, I can account for it on no other ground than that of a special interposition of Providence, that the reputation of Christian pastors is not more frequently attacked by slander, and destroyed by calumny. But probably we see in this, as in

other cases, that wise arrangement of Providence by which things of delicacy and consequence are preserved, by calling forth greater solicitude for their safety. Church members should, therefore, be tremblingly alive to the importance of defending the minister's character. They should neither expect to see him perfect, nor hunt after his imperfections—imperfections, which, after all, may be consistent with not only real but eminent piety—they should not take pleasure in either magnifying or looking at them ; but make all reasonable excuse for them, and endeavor to lose sight of his, as they do the spots of the sun amidst the blaze of radiance with which they are surrounded. Let them not be the subject of conversation even between yourselves, much less before your children, servants and the world. If you talk of his faults in derision, who will speak of his excellencies with admiration? Do not look at him with suspicion, but repose an honorable confidence in his character. Do not make him an offender for a word, and refuse to him that charity and candor of judgment which would be granted to every one else. Do not magnify indiscretion into immoralities, and exact from him that absolute perfection which in your own case you find to be unattainable. Beware of whispers, inuendoes, significant nods, and that slanderous silence, which is more defamatory than the broadest accusation. Defend him against the groundless attacks of others. Never hear him spoken of with undeserved reproach, without indignantly repelling the shafts of calumny. Express your firm and dignified displeasure against the whittling that would make him ridiculous, the scorner that would make him contemptible, and the defamer that would brand him as immoral.—*John Angell James.*

LEVITY OF MINISTERS.

There is a deplorable tendency in some ministers to levity. They may not be funny in the pulpit, but they are so in the parlor ; so often as to become characterized by it, and the children expect a jolly time whenever Rev. Mr. — comes to the house.

All agree that the mind needs occasional relaxation, and es-

pecially in the case of men whose daily avocation is brain-work. But let not a minister become a buffoon, or a "good fellow." Especially let him not excite boisterous merriment, which is pretty sure to be more or less sinful, by showing us some doctrine or persons in a way which awakens contempt. A smile produced by genuine wit or humor, is more refreshing than a horse-laugh, which is remembered with self-reproach.

Association of ideas, is a powerful mental influence ; and if we hear a man preach the gospel, no matter how ably, it is hard to repel the reflection that we saw him the other day making comic faces, assuming undignified attitudes, and telling ridiculous stories.

A case mentioned by the Rev. Wm. Innes, pastor of a Baptist Church in Edinburgh, with whom the writer has a pleasant acquaintance, is in point. It came under his own observation.

A man ascribed the ruin of his soul to a popular preacher in that city, whom he heard deliver a powerful sermon on some occasion. He went, after meeting, to a house of a friend, and was delighted to meet the preacher there. But he was terribly disappointed. The man who had thundered the threatenings of Divine truth with awful impressiveness, and impressed him with awful convictions of his lost state, played now the mountebank. His adventures, his jokes and his anecdotes kept the company in a roar of laughter till past midnight. He was confounded at the scene, and concluded that Christianity was disbelieved by its professed teachers. He felt in his soul a contempt both for the preacher and his doctrine. He lived and died an infidel !

Let all of us keep in mind the saying of Paul, "If I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor." Gal. ii. 18.—*Selected.*

LUTHER'S VIEWS OF PREACHING.

We ought to direct ourselves in preaching according to the condition of the hearers. But most preachers commonly fail herein ; they preach that which little edified the simple people. Bu-

cer and Zuinglius, at Marpang, preached in all state and curious manner, thereby to hear the bell, as if they should say, "Luther and Malancthon ! behold what learned fellows we are." To preach plain and simple is a great wit. Christ himself preached of tilling ground, of mustard seed, etc., etc. He used altogether plain and simple similitudes. St. Paul never used such high and stately words as Demosthenes and Cicero did, but he spoke (properly and plainly) words which signified and showed high and stately matters. He did well in not speaking so trim and finically, otherwise every man would speak wondrous highly. When I am in the pulpit, then I resolve to preach only to men and maid servants. I would not make a step into the pulpit for the sakes of Philip Malancthon, Justus Jonas, or the whole university, for they are well seen in Scripture already ; but when preachers will direct their sermons to the high, learned, and deep understanding, and will breathe out altogether Rabbonies and master-pieces, then the poor, unlearned people present do stand like a flock of kine.

Cursed are all preachers that, in the church aim at high, hard, and neat things, and neglecting the saving healths of the poor, unlearned people, seek their own honor and praise, therewith to please one or two ambitious persons. I esteem those to be the best preachers which teach the most common people and youth most plainly and simply, without subtilly screwed words or enlargements. Christ taught the people by plain and simple parables.—*Luther's Table Talk.*

SINCERITY.—Sincerity is opposed to disguise, simulation, false pretence, and every degree of hypocrisy. We may deceive men, but we cannot deceive God ; hence, no prayer, no praise, and no act of worship can be acceptable to God, which is not performed with an entirely sincere heart. To practice sincerity, we must speak only as we think, do as we profess, be what we seem to be, and what we wish others to think we are. Insincerity is a crime in any person, but of all others, it is most hateful in a minister of the Gospel.

THE RELIGIOUS PRESS.

The most gifted pastor may supplement himself from the varied treasures of a church literature. The Press is as ready to help the ministry as to undermine and overthrow it. If the pulpit has a popular rival, it is the newspaper. But this may and ought to be made as great a power in the church, as it is in the outside world. It is the very best form in which to furnish a vast and needed amount of popular religious reading. Its general circulation is better economy than the most systematic tract distribution; for, well conducted, it brings into a family, each week, more gospel truth than any tract contains, with the additional gain of any ecclesiastical, religious, and general intelligence from every part of the world. Why, a religious newspaper in full sympathy with the church coming into every family, would be an immense relief to the ministry. It would inform, educate and liberalize our people on many subjects, as can be done by no other agency. The whole work of giving to the people a literature in kind with the gospel we preach, demands vigilance and energy. It must be urged into circulation. Bible preaching opens the way for a literature of the same tone and spirit.—*Rev. C. Hawley.*

THE GREAT THEME OF THE MINISTRY.—The preaching of the Cross is now, as ever, the power of God, and in what men deride as its foolishness still lives the unwasting wisdom of God. Oh that ministers relied upon it more completely, and declared it more explicitly! In “days of yore” Philetus, of Hermogenes the conjurer, says ancient lore, coming to dispute and maintain an argument with St. James the Elder, relied much upon his sophistry; but the Apostle preached Christ to him with such simplicity and power, that Philetus yielded and returned to his master, saying, “I went forth a conjurer, but am returned a Christian.” This age has nothing to take its place. Only the Cross can lift men to heaven.—*Selected.*

HOW TO SECURE DIVINE SUPPORT.

“Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee.”—PSALM LV. 22.

Human nature is weak and clearly fails to perform what duty and interest demand.

A few illustrations of this fact will enable us to appreciate the direction of the text.

Human weakness is seen in the course of the dissipated.

They see ruin in their path, and often resolve to reform, yet are drawn onward.

The same weakness is seen in those who put off the claims of religion.

They believe they must repent and reform, or perish, and yet they put it off.

The same weakness is seen in the inactive, half-hearted and often crooked course of professors of religion.

They know that they are not living as they ought, and often promise amendment, yet live on in the same manner.

Without the gospel this would all be a mystery. It was a mystery to the more enlightened and better class of heathen, who were without the light of the Gospel.

Man is fallen and depraved, and becomes good, and remains good, only as he is renewed and kept by Divine grace.

The text opens up our only source of relief, our only ground of hope.

Humanity is unable to support its own burdens, and can be sustained only by casting those burdens upon the Lord.

A brief explanation of the terms in the text will prepare the way for a clear and personal application of its saving truth.

I. A BRIEF EXPLANATION OF THE TERMS.

1. A burden is anything that is borne, that which is carried with difficulty, any oppressive load.

In a religious sense, a burden is anything that oppresses the mind.

Any difficulty to be overcome is a burden.

Any temptation to be resisted is a burden.

Any trial to be borne—

Any work or duty to be performed—

Any suffering to be endured—

Anything that causes anguish, fear or painful solicitude is a burden.

2. To cast our burden upon the Lord, is to look to God, from whence relief must come ; it is to trust God, for strength to do, for wisdom to direct, for fortitude to bear, and for final success.

To reach this point, there must be a sense of our own weakness.

There must be a purpose to do and bear all that God requires.

There must be faith in God, full confidence that he will sustain us and our burden.

We must not be afraid to venture, lest God should let us fall with our burden.

Some hold on to their burdens, through a fear that if they cast them upon the Lord, he will let them and their burdens fall together.

II. A DIRECT AND PERSONAL APPLICATION OF THE SAVING TRUTH OF THE TEXT.

“Cast thy burden upon the Lord and he shall sustain thee.”

Do you hear it, ye burdened ones ?

This is spoken to every class of burdened ones, and of every kind of burden.

1. Cast your burden of ignorance upon the Lord, and he will sustain you.

Seek to know the right way.

Pray to God to be guided ; for light.

Follow the best light you have.

Let sinners do this and they will come out right.

2. Cast your burden of weakness upon the Lord, and he will sustain you.

Sinners tremble with weakness when they attempt to make an effort to forsake sin and obey God.

Christians often neglect duty through a sense of weakness.

3. Cast your burden of fear upon the Lord, and he will sustain thee.

“The fear of man bringeth a snare.”

How many are deterred from serving God through fear of their fellow-beings.

How many Christians are kept back from duty by the fear of man ?

4. Cast your burden of guilt upon the Lord, and he will sustain you.

This is peculiarly applicable to awakened sinners, struggling under their burden of guilt.

Christians often incur guilt, and have occasion to fly to this gracious promise.

5. Cast your burden of labor upon the Lord, and he will sustain you.

The less christians do and sacrifice for God and his cause, the greater they feel the burden.

Let them venture upon him a large investment of effort, and it will pay a larger increase.

God will sustain you in proportion to the effort made.

Men often lose what they do, by not doing enough to secure the end.

We cannot expect God to crown our effort with success, when we do only half of what is demanded.

6. Cast your burden of solicitude upon the Lord, and he will sustain you.

A thousand anxious thoughts arise in the mind in regard to the future, over which we have no control.

We borrow trouble from to-morrow, from next week, next month, next year.

Do the work of to-day, and leave the future to the Providence of God.

7. Cast your burden of trials upon the Lord, and he will sustain you.

Bear up bravely against them.

Trust in God and he will support you under every trial, and give you the victory.

"I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." Heb. xiii. 5.

8. Cast upon the Lord the burden of your griefs and sorrows, and he will sustain you.

All have more or less sorrow in this life.

"Not from the dust affliction grows,
Nor troubles rise by chance ;
Yet we are born to cares and woes,
A sad inheritance.

As sparks break out from burning coals,
 And still are upward borne ;
 So grief is rooted in our souls,
 And man grows up to mourn."

But we may cast the burden of our sorrows upon the Lord, and he will sustain us.

It would be well for us to be able to sing in its true spirit and temper, the balance of the hymn quoted above.

"Yet with my God I leave my cause,
 And trust his promised grace ;
 He rules me by his well known laws
 Of love and righteousness.

Not all the pains that e'er I bore,
 Shall spoil my future peace ;
 For death and hell can do no more
 Than what my Father please."

In the light of this subject, how plain and easy is the way of salvation ?

Let me apply it to those who have yet to make their first religious effort.

Have you not been thinking about entering upon a religious life ?

How powerful do you feel the influence of the world, in its various forms, to hold you back when you think of setting out to serve God in earnest ?

How many and great are the difficulties in your way, when you look the ground over and think of starting ?

A frowning steep mountain lifts its difficult ascent before you.

A giant foe guards this pass around its rugged clefts.

A dark and fearful river rolls through the only gorge admitting passage on the other side.

These difficulties are insurmountable to unaided humanity, and to attempt them in our own strength is to fail.

But if you go to God with your difficulties, and attempt them in his name, they will all vanish.

You will find that rugged mountain only an ideal one.

That giant will prove to be only a spectre foe.

That dark and dreadful river is only the work of the imagination.

These difficulties are thus seen through the mist that Satan throws over the mind of the spell-bound sinner.

Venture upon the difficulties in the name of God, and they will vanish.

Let me also make an application of the subject to the christian.

Come, ye poor, weak, burdened, halting, complaining and fearful christians, and let me try to enspirit you with the glorious truth of this subject.

Hast thou come to the sanctuary with all thy burdens ?

Hark ! a voice from heaven speaks, and speaks to you—"Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee."

Is not the pledge of Omnipotence sufficient ?

Dare you not venture, with all your interest, into the hands that hold up the universe ?

O thou of little faith !—Is a worm afraid of breaking through an eternal rock ?

Come and rest on the rock of Divinity ; on the sure promise of him,

"Whose love is as great as his power,
And neither knows measure or end."

Never complain of burdens again.

Never tremble with weakness again.

Never shrink from duty again.

God will sustain you.

"Sustain thee"—What a promise ! Sustain thee ; support thee, hold thee up, keep thee from falling, keep thee from sinking in despair.

"Here rest each fearful trembling heart ;
Fixed on this gracious promise, rest."

Here bring all your burdens, and all your grief and sorrows, and rest with them all upon God's all sustaining grace, and here, in obedience, faith and hope, abide in deep and undisturbed repose, while the storms of life shall last.

Say with the Psalmist, "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble, therefore will we not fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be cast into the midst of the sea ; though the waters thereof roar and be troubled ; though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof. There is a river the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God."

SEPARATION FROM THE WORLD.

"Wherefore come out from among them and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing ; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."—2 COR. VI. 17, 18.

There are two great principles which lie back of this text, from which Paul deduced it as a conclusion.

1. There is and can be no agreement between right and wrong.

The apostle inquires, "what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness?"

"What communion hath light with darkness?"

"What concord hath Christ with Belial?"

"What part hath he that believeth with an infidel?"

"What agreement hath the temple of God with idols?"

2. Christians "are the temple of the living God, as God hath said, I will dwell in them and walk in them."

From these two great facts the text is deduced, "Wherefore come out," &c.

The text is a statement of God's covenant with its conditions.

It is applicable to each, personally, and to a whole church, collectively.

It was addressed to the Corinthian church collectively, yet their covenant relation to God was as individuals, and depended upon their individual characters.

THE CONDITIONS AND ADVANTAGES OF THIS GREAT COMPACT BETWEEN GOD AND MEN, CONSTITUTE MY PRESENT THEME.

I. What does God claim of us as a condition of becoming and being his people?

The words are plain, "Come out from among them and be ye separate, and touch not the unclean thing."

1. From whom are we to come out and be separate?

Originally, particular reference was made to idolaters, but all corrupt and ungodly people are included.

The subject opens with a remark that includes all who are not christians.

"Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers."

The general terms employed show that the expression, "come out from among them," includes all sinners.

Light and darkness, Christ and Belial.

Belial is from the Hebrew, not or no, and advantage, without profit, worthless ; hence the devil, as the embodiment of all evil.

"What part hath he that believeth with an infidel?" Infidel means one that does not believe.

These terms include all wicked persons. This view is supported by other scriptures like the following : "But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother, be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolator, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner ; with such an one no not to eat." 1 Cor. v. 11.

This includes just such sinners by name as we have among us, such as are common in this and every community.

2. To what extent are we commanded to keep ourselves separate from the world of sinners ?

It certainly cannot be that we are bound to abstain from all intercourse with unconverted persons.

We are to make efforts to save sinners, which requires some intercourse with them.

Yet our intercourse with them has a limit some where, but where is it ?

(1.) It certainly must forbid all unnecessary and hurtful intercourse with the world.

We may have business transactions with sinners, but only so far as we can conduct them upon honest christian principles.

We may have such intercourse with the world around us as is necessary for all proper efforts to reform sinners, and to promote the universal good.

If christians go beyond these points they do it to their own damage.

(2.) The text principally forbids all religious fellowship with sinners.

We have no right to join in church fellowship with sinners, knowing them to be sinners.

The first idea of a church is contradistinction and separation from the world, so that to join the church is to separate from the world, and to be outside of the church is to be in the world.

But the Scriptures are clear on this question.

"Moreover if thy brother trespass against thee, go and tel

him his fault between thee and him alone ; if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church ; but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican." Matt. xviii. 15-17.

"Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them that cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine ye have learned, and avoid them." Rom. xvi. 17.

"Purge out therefore the old leaven that ye may be a new lump." 1 Cor. v. 7.

"Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly." 2 Thes. iii. 6:

Such is the separation from sinners commanded—"Come out from among them and be ye separate, and touch not the unclean thing."

If we will do this, God has promised to receive us and to be our Father.

II. What does God promise to do for us, on condition that we will come out from the world and keep ourselves separate ?

1. God promises to receive us upon these terms.

He will receive us graciously with a free pardon.

He will receive us graciously into his family by adoption.

2. God has promised to be a Father unto us upon these terms.

But what is it to be a Father in truth and verity ?

Human fathers are imperfect, and some are monsters.

God will be a Father in truth and verity, all that the relation implies.

A father is the protector of his children.

A father is the provider for his children.

A father is the counselor and guide of his children.

3. God promises that upon these terms, we shall be his sons and daughters.

This secures all the advantages of children. "If children then heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Jesus Christ."

It secures all the honor of a divine relationship.

4. The whole is confirmed by God, and subscribed with his own awful name, "Saith the Lord Almighty."

III. The importance of complying with God's terms, upon which he tenders to us his own divine paternity.

1. The great benefit so graciously tendered us demands acceptance.

What an insult to God to refuse it ; what ingratitude is involved !

What madness and self-destruction !

What would you think of a poor wretched orphan, subsisting upon the crumbs he can gather from door to door, should he refuse the offer of adoption by one rich and good ?

2. Religious consistency and the solemnity of plighted vows demand it.

It is implied in baptism.

You promised it when you joined the church.

It is implied in the very act of joining.

Other and various vows have been made.

3. The honor of God demands it of all who profess religion.

It is a crime of no small magnitude to wear the name of God, and the profession of his religion, in which to devote ourselves to the world, and to serve the devil.

The professor carries the name of God and the profession of his religion every where he goes.

How often is God and truth dishonored ?

We are commanded to do all that we do in the name of the Lord Jesus.

If all professors do all their works in the name of the Lord Jesus, his name is made to shield many dark transactions.

How important then is it for those who profess to be the children of God, to come out from the world and be separate ?

4. It is no less important for sinners to heed the subject, and respond to God's tender of his covenant of peace.

They cannot flatter themselves that they are escaping responsibility and guilt, by refusing to take the vows of God's covenant upon them.

The imperfections of professors is no justification for them.

They ought to have entered into covenant with God long ago, and ought now to be living christians.

EARTH IS BUT A TEMPORARY ABODE.

“Arise ye and depart ; for this is not your rest.”—MICAH II. 10.

This text was uttered in the ears of the Israelites just before their captivity.

Some suppose it to be a warning to the few pious ones to flee, before the ruin came.

It rather appears to be an announcement that they should be driven out of the land, as a punishment for their sins.

The land was so polluted by their crimes, that God would not allow them to rest in it, but would send them out of it.

Their position was analogous to that of all the dwellers upon these mortal shores ; this is not our rest.

We are too much inclined to regard this world as a home and final resting place, and need to have the admonition oft repeated, “arise and depart, for this is not your rest.”

That we may feel the force of the text, and apply it, let us inquire into the nature of the obligation imposed, the thing commanded, and the reason assigned for it.

I. THE NATURE OF THE OBLIGATION IMPOSED, THE THING COMMANDED.

In what sense should the dwellers on earth arise and depart ?

It is not to hasten their death, to cut short their years.

It is every man's duty to live as long as he can.

1. We must abandon the world as the object of our affections and trust.

“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.” 1 John ii. 15.

“If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affections on things above, and not on things on the earth.” Col. iii. 1, 2.

2. We must entertain a rational and firm hope of gaining another and better world, a final home, a settled rest.

Such a home and rest God has promised in his word.

Towards it did the affections of the patriarchs tend, and for it did they look.

“They desired a better country. They looked for a city which

hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." Heb. xi. 10, 16.

3. We must employ the appointed means of reaching that better land.

We must walk in the way that leads to heaven.

"Arise" from this careless indifference, and religious inactivity.

"Depart," make progress, "grow in grace." Do as Paul did, "Press forward towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Phil. iii. 14.

II. THE REASON ASSIGNED.

"This is not your rest." This world is not and cannot be the rest of good men.

It is not suited to their dispositions and taste, it cannot satisfy their desires, it cannot fulfil their hopes.

1. The world is not adapted to man's spiritual nature.

It might do for mere animal existence, but man is more than an animal.

It might answer for creatures merely rational, but man is more than rational, he is spiritual, moral, and immortal, and cannot feed his higher nature on dust the serpent's food.

The world never did satisfy one immortal mind.

Solomon tried all the forms of worldly pleasure, and wrote his experience upon them all, "Vanity of vanities."

The soul must have the bread of heaven.

2. The inspired representations of life in this world, show it to be anything but our rest.

It is a tempest-wrought sea on which we are driven.

It is a wilderness, a dreary waste where we dwell.

It is a field of labor and toil, to be occupied until night calls to repose.

It is a battle plain, a scene of strife and danger.

It is a land of pilgrimage, across which weary travelers are seen making their way to their home and rest.

3. The recorded experience of all the ancient worthies, proves that earth is not the rest of humanity.

The patriarchs were only strangers and pilgrims in it.

Moses was so impressed with the idea, that he turned away from the pomp and glory of a throne.

David longed for wings that he might leave the world, and fly away and be at rest.

Paul desired to depart and to be with Christ which is far better.

4. The perpetual changes which we see and feel, conspire with the history of the past, and prospect of the future, to admonish us that this is not our rest.

“The Fathers, where are they? and the prophets, do they live for ever?”

Where are the people that lived a hundred years ago?

Where are many of our fathers and mothers, companions, brothers and sisters, and children?

Our friends are constantly leaving this land, and we must soon go.

“Arise ye, be going, for this is not your rest.”

REMARKS.

1. Those who devote themselves to this world, as their chief good, make a fearful mistake.

Industry and economy are duties, and are necessary to furnish the means of being useful.

But he who labors to get the world, beyond convenience, and what he can use for the cause of God, cheats himself.

He may rob God, and withhold or take from his fellows, but he cheats himself the worst.

There are those who might give away, for good objects, half they have got, and be richer than they now are.

What they keep they are sure to lose, but what they give away, they save.

The only true way is to use the world as a means to reach the proper end of being. Use it “as not abusing it.”

The moment we seize upon the world as an end, a permanent interest, we are cheated, and barter that which is ever enduring, for that which must perish with the using.

2. We ought to live in a constant state of preparation for our exit.

This is not our rest, and we know it; we must soon leave, but the time when, we know not. Be ready.

We should live as the children of Israel cite the passover, “with their loins girded, their shoes on their feet, and their staff in their hand,” ready to start.

It may encourage the pious to reflect how near they may be to their final rest.

"This is not your rest," but it lies but just on the other side of yon stream, not far hence.

We are nearing it every day.

"Soon will the toilsome strife be o'er,
Of sublunary care,
And life's dull vanities no more,
This anxious breast ensnare."

SOUNDNESS OF HEART IN GOD'S STATUTES.

"Let my heart be sound in thy statutes."—PSALM CXIX. 80.

The text is a prayer, and implies a petition for all that divine light and influence by which the heart may become sound in the divine statutes.

It supposes an unsound state of heart; human hearts are depraved, and hard, and full of unbelief, and they would remain so, but for the renewing power of divine grace.

The Psalmist had felt the claims of divine truth, and been reformed, at least in part; but still felt that his heart was not yet entirely sound in the divine statutes. He probably felt his heart drawn away from obeying the law of God, and hence the prayer of the text, "Let my heart be sound in thy statutes."

By the statutes of God, we must understand the law, the commandments.

With us these statutes are found in the Scriptures, and in them our hearts should be sound. "

I propose to discuss but a single point.

WHAT IS NECESSARY TO SOUNDNESS OF HEART IN THE DIVINE STATUTES?

Sound, here, means right, correct, free from error, orthodox. Let my heart be right, or free from error, in regard to thy statutes.

1. In order to this there must be a clear understanding of the divine statutes, not only of the letter but of the sense.

To misunderstand the word through ignorance, is the worst kind of unsoundness.

The Saviour said to the Sadducees, "Do ye not therefore err, because ye know not the Scriptures, neither the power of God?" Mark xii. 24.

We must first know the Scriptures to be sound in them.

In order to this, we must read them with care, not merely as a duty, but to learn.

We must read them with prayer for divine light, that we may understand them.

The Psalmist prayed, "Open thou mine eyes that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law."

2. In order to soundness of heart in the divine statutes, we must firmly believe them.

Many do not believe the Scriptures, and of course are unsound.

Some reject them as a malicious forgery.

Some regard them as a fable or fiction.

Some admit their use as mere history, correct in many things, but not inspired.

To be sound in them, we must believe them as God's own statutes.

3. To be sound in the divine statutes, we must regard them with deep interest, and warm affection.

How many really believe that the Scriptures are inspired, and teach the will of God, as firmly as they believe any other truth, and yet feel little or no interest in them?

They read them less than they read other works.

They do not love them as heaven's rich gift, and as containing the most precious truths.

"I will delight myself in thy statutes." Verse 16. "The law of thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver." Verse 72. "O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day." Verse 97.

4. To be sound in the divine statutes, we must obey them.

The end of a statute is obedience; laws are given to be obeyed.

"Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves." James i. 22.

There is no soundness without obedience.

No matter how firmly we may believe the Scriptures ; no matter how elevated our views of them may be, as a source of information and intellectual light, there is no soundness of heart in them, until we obey them.

To all such believers in the divine statutes, who do not obey them, God will say, " Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee."

I wish I could enforce this subject so as to leave its deep impress upon every human heart present.

There is a weight of importance attached to it commensurate with human destiny.

The intrinsic value of the statutes of heaven is a sufficient reason for seeking to be sound of heart in them.

If you consider the Scriptures with reference to their origin and author ; they are from heaven, and have God for their author.

If you consider them as a history of the past, no history carries the mind back to the dawn of creation as does the Bible.

If you consider them as a present light to guide, and a present good to bless, there is no other book which contributes so much to human weal.

If you consider them as a revelation of the future, they loom up with visions of the world to come, in regard to which they give the only certain light that gleams upon the final destiny of humanity.

Is it not then worth an effort on your part to make your hearts sound in these statutes.

Every interest, personal, social, religious and political ; all that concerns us for the present and future, for time and eternity is involved.

By the interests of your own personality, your character and prospects for life, and your destiny hereafter, I entreat you to seek soundness of heart in the divine statutes.

By your social relation, and the obligations you are under to those you love, I entreat you.

By the hallowed cause of religion, I entreat you.

By the love of home and country ; in the name of your patriotism, I entreat you.

It is becoming sound in the statutes of God, that will save our country from the destruction which has blotted so many nations from the earth.

THE WAY TO SECURE A CROWN.

“Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.”—REV. II. 10.

God governs man as a moral agent, and requires of him duties, which he must perform in order to enjoy the divine favor.

He proposes to man a high and glorious destiny, and prescribes as the means of reaching it, a proper discharge of all the duties of this life.

All the duties of this entire life is comprehended in this one expression, “Be thou faithful unto death.”

By a crown of life, is meant all the joys and glories of heaven.

To be faithful is the way to the crown which is the end of the christian’s life.

Let us then consider what it is to be faithful unto death, and what is the promised reward, a crown of life.

I. WHAT IS MEANT BY FAITHFULNESS?

It is not a bigoted contention for sects and creeds.

It is an entire devotedness to right and duty.

It includes,

1. A discharge of all the duties we owe to God.

Reverence, fear, love and worship.

2. All the duties we owe to our fellow-beings.

Justice to all.

Benevolence to the distressed and unfortunate.

Instruction to the ignorant.

Encouragement to the weak and wavering.

Reproof to the vicious and wicked.

In a word what we can do to save our fellow-beings.

3. The duties we owe to ourselves.

Reasonable industry and provision for our bodies.

The cultivation of our minds.

Suppression of all vicious habits.

The cultivation of virtue and piety.

II. THE REWARD, A CROWN OF LIFE.

This includes the whole of the heavenly reward.

1. A crown is significant of victory.

The christian conquers all his foes.

2. A crown is significant of honor and glory.

The christian's crown will be a crown of glory.

The manner in which he wins it.

The time, place, and circumstances of its bestowment.

3. A crown is significant of joy.

The christian's crown will be a crown of joy.

It will be such in view of the trials past, victories won, enemies conquered, and reward gained.

In view of the place and state in which it is worn.

4. This crown is significant of immortality, "A crown of life."

All other crowns must fade and be lost.

They are perishable in their own nature, this is not.

They may be plucked from the brow by a rival, this never.

The wearer must die beneath the crown, the wearer of this will never die.

Will you have this crown?

There is one for each of you.

In the christian warfare, men are crowned for the feats they have won.

There are the same foes for all to conquer, the world, the flesh, and the devil.

Strike then for a crown, the warfare will not be long.

GOD'S LOVE MANIFESTED THROUGH CHRIST.

"But God commendeth his love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners Christ died for us."—Rom. v. 8.

The word, commend, has the sense of to recommend, or to show conspicuously.

The meaning is that God made a remarkable exhibition of his love towards us, by the death of Christ for sinners.

A few thoughts upon this wonderful display of Divine love, is all that I shall attempt in this discourse.

I. The subjects of this love were sinners.

It would not be a wonder that God should love angels.

It would not be wonderful to suppose that God loved man in his original state, as he made him.

But that he should love him as a sinner is wonderful.

1. Sinners are apostates. God made man in his own image, and man fell and became unholy, and hateful.

2. Still persisting in their rebellion against God. Not repenting sinners, but sinners in open hostility to authority and law.

3. Sinners for whom no plea could be offered, guilty sinners, deserving nothing but wrath at his hand.

II. The manner in which God commendeth his love is no less wonderful than the subjects of its regard.

It was by the death of Christ for us.

Here we have as note-worthy,

1. The character of Christ who died for us.

He was not our equal, a man suffering for his fellow man.

He was not an angel, but above all angels and the object of their devotion.

He was "in the form of God, and thought it not robbery to be equal with God."

2. He died for us, for sinners.

This comprehends all he did for us; he came into the world, was born, lived, labored and died to redeem us.

Christ did not die merely as a martyr or an example, but as an atoning sacrifice.

III. The object, the design of this display of Divine love is no less wonderful.

The whole is comprehended in his own words, "The Son of man is come to save that which was lost." It includes,

1. Pardon, the remission of sin, which all may obtain here.

2. Adoption into the family of God.

"But when the fullness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." Gal. iv. 5.

This carries with it all the rights and immunities of children.

3. The glory and happiness of heaven.

REMARKS.

1. What a wide door is opened for the salvation of sinners.

Christ died for sinners, for all sinners.

For sinners of every class and degree.

“Were sinners more than sands upon the ocean shore ;

He hath for all a ransom paid,

For all a full atonement made.”

Come sinner, for you Christ died, come and embrace him and be saved.

Will you turn away from such love ?

2. What a sure foundation is here laid for the hope of believers.

“He that spareth not his own son but delivereth him up for us all, how shall he not with him freely give us all things ?”

If God loved us before Christ died, when we were yet sinners, he will not fail to love us now that we have been called by his grace, and renewed by his Spirit.

If God loved us so as to give his Son, he will not withhold smaller gifts, but give us all things with him.

WORKING FOR GOD.

BY REV. R. DONKERSLEY.

“Lord what wilt thou have me to do ?”—ACTS. IX. 6.

PROEM :—Gather this from the context.

DISCUSSION.—THE CHARACTER OF THIS INQUIRY.

This inquiry is quite as appropriate when coming from the lips of the individual Christian, or, from the united body of the Church of the Redeemer, as when extorted by the divine Spirit from the heart of Saul of Tarsus, or from any other deeply awakened sinner. We shall in the present discourse consider the inquiry of our text as coming from converted men and women, as to the

manner in which they may the most effectually advance the Redeemer's kingdom in the world.

Five distinct thoughts will present themselves to our mind by simply emphasizing as many different words in this brief Scripture quotation.

Lord what wilt thou have me to *do*?

In this reading, our text contains a tacit acknowledgment that there is work before us.

It is hardly necessary to say that the work in question, is spiritual in its character, having special and direct reference to human salvation. Who then, that looks around him, can doubt for a moment but that a widely extended field is spread out before him, imperiously calling for a legion of laborers? Look into your own family, your Sabbath congregation, your Sunday school, the surrounding community, the State, the Nation, and the world at large. From all these several departments of Christian effort you hear the cry, "The harvest truly is plenteous," &c. Matt. ix. 37, 38.

What wilt thou have *me* to do?

Whoever honestly makes this inquiry, thereby acknowledges that his services are demanded in this field. This is a personal inquiry. No more important thought can be gathered from this Scripture than that we allow its interrogation to assume an individuality of character. "England," said Nelson, on the eve of his most memorable naval engagement, "expects every man to do his duty!" The Captain of our salvation addresses all who have enlisted under his banner in like sentiments. Let the response be,

"Since I must fight if I would reign,
Increase my courage Lord;
I'll bear the toil, endure the pain,
Supported by thy word."

Lord *what* wilt thou have me to do?

This inquiry goes upon the supposition that there are diversities of labor to be performed, that there is corresponding diversity of talent in the Church, and that it is highly important that each individual laborer ascertain the precise post assigned him.

These thoughts are distinctly set forth and forcibly illustrated

by the apostle: "For as we have many members in one body," &c. Rom. xii. 4-8. See also, Eph. iv. 7, 11, 12, 13. The apostles themselves were a striking illustration of this diversity of gifts wherewith to meet the demand for diversity of labor. Mark iii. 14-19. The great leading characters in the "Reformation" present before us the same diversity of mental and spiritual gifts. Luther is bold and courageous. Erasmus cautious and wary. Melancthon learned and logical. Zwingli fiery and impulsive. In the early career of Methodism we receive further illustration of the fact under discussion. We have John Wesley with his iron constitution, missionary zeal, and unrivalled legislative and governing talent. John Fletcher with his profound knowledge of the Scriptures,—his rare logical powers, forcible reasoning, and saintly spirit. George Whitefield with his oratorical attractions, and, Charles Wesley pouring his soul-stirring poetry into the hearts and upon the lips of the tens of thousands converted to God through the instrumentality of himself and co-laborers.

Lord what wilt *thou* have me to do?

This inquiry is suggestive of the thought that it is the exclusive prerogative of the Lord to assign each individual laborer his special duties in the general field. This will bring us in an inquiring and teachable spirit to the throne of grace.

Lord what wilt thou have me *to do*?

Presented in this form the inquiry breathes the spirit of practical obedience to the Divine allotment. Whoever honestly makes such inquiry stands pledged to do the bidding of his Heavenly Master, wherever, and to whatsoever such bidding may lead him. "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth." 1 Sam. iii. 9.

"Am I a soldier of the cross,
A follower of the Lamb,
And shall I fear to own his cause,
Or blush to speak his name?"

CLOSING REMARKS.

Were this inquiry thus put by every professing Christian, and its answer were practically attended to, what a sublime and interesting sight the universal Church of Christ would present.

Every Christian at work—all working for the salvation of men—and each working at his or her Divinely assigned post.

What glorious results we should soon witness. What a grand moral transformation our depraved world would soon present.

Let every Christian now sincerely, earnestly and obediently send forth from the throne of grace the prayerful inquiry of our text:—"Lord what wilt thou have me to do?"

A FEARFUL WARFARE.

"Let us not fight against God."—ACTS XXIII. 9.

Give a history of the circumstances.

I. Who may be said to fight against God?

1. All who resist and oppose the principles of his government.

This is done by maintaining false religions.

By resisting the spread of the true religion.

All reform is of God, and all resistance of reform is fighting against God.

2. All practical sinners fight against God.

Every sin is a war upon God.

3. All who withhold their hearts resist God.

II. The unpromising character of this contest with God.

1. It is very wicked.

God is your creator, preserver, redeemer, and author of all your mercies.

It is against all that is right.

All that is good and lovely.

2. It destroys the sinner's peace and happiness here.

3. All who engage in it are leading others into the same ruin.

4. It is sure to end in everlasting defeat and ruin.

BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION.

THE PARABLES OF OUR LORD.

We have treated of figurative language upon general principles, but the Parables of our Lord are so conspicuous in his teachings as to entitle them to more special attention.

A parable is an allegory, and is only a continued metaphor. In a metaphor the sign or statement of comparison is omitted, but the resemblance is always implied. Take the words of Christ as an illustration, "Ye are the light of the world." This is a simple metaphor, no sign of comparison is contained in it; it is not affirmed that they are like light, but that they are the light, yet we know that they only resemble light in some particulars. Again it is said, "Ye are the salt of the earth." But christians are not salt, they are only like it in some particulars. To transform this pure metaphor into a comparison in form, we must affirm what is only implied, by which we shall express the sense thus. As salt preserves from putrefaction, so do christians, by their influence and prayers, preserve the world from moral corruption and ruin. Some of our Lord's parables are very short, while others are drawn out to greater length. The parable of the leaven hid in three measures of meal is one of the shortest ones. Matt. xiii. 33. While the parable of the Prodigal Son, is one of the longest.

There are three rules which should never be overlooked in the interpretation of parables.

1. The subject illustrated should be first noted and well understood. It should not be confounded with the subject by which it is illustrated. They are always distinct, but resemble each other in some particulars. The subject illustrated may be known from the fact, that it is the main subject of the discourse, while the subject used as the illustration is incidental to the main subject, and constitutes neither its beginning, end or object. In all the parables of our Lord, the main subject is either stated in terms, or is clearly implied in the circumstances which gave rise to them.

2. The subject used as an illustration is always a plain one, generally understood; and hence, needs no explanation. To un-

dertake to make an obscure subject plain, by an illustration borrowed from what is equally unknown and obscure, would be absurd indeed. The only explanation which the subject used as an illustration demands, must be historical, as what was plain to everybody when Christ taught by parables, may not be known now, only through an acquaintance with the history of those times and that people. That which is understood alone can be used as an illustration.

3. The resemblance between the subject illustrated and the subject used as the illustration, must not be spun out by fancy beyond the demands of the subject. The object of an illustration is to make something plain by comparing it to something which is already plain, and when that is gained the comparison has done its work, and should be dropped without pushing it into other resemblances not essential to the object for which it is introduced. Two objects may resemble each other in some things, so that the one will answer well to illustrate the other, and yet not resemble each other in all particulars, and to attempt to force such a resemblance is to abuse the truth.

We will now give a few illustrations of these rules by applying them to some of the parables of our Lord.

"The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened." Matt. xiii. 33.

The subject is here stated, it is "the kingdom of heaven." This is the main subject, and all depends upon a right understanding of it. This must first be understood before we can proceed further in the interpretation of the parable, according to rule one. If by the kingdom of heaven, we understand the place and state of the blessed in the future world, it must be difficult to understand its resemblance to leaven. But if we understand the gospel dispensation in its saving influence, the likeness to leaven cannot be overlooked.

Leaven is the illustration. It is not the main subject ; the object is not to explain the action of leaven, but to use its well known action to explain the operation of the gospel. The action of leaven is understood by all, and needs no explanation, but only an application to the subject to be explained. Leaven is active,

diffusive, and progressive, rendering the whole like itself, diffusing its own nature through the whole lump, and thus it represents the action of the gospel. As leaven works in the meal, so grace works in the hearts of individuals, and so the gospel works in the world.

Here we may suppose the comparison to end, and should not attempt to push it into doctrinal views foreign to its design, as we once heard a young minister do in a sermon upon the parable. He made the comparison to depend mainly upon the quantity of meal, three measures. The *three* measures of meal represented the three elements in man's nature, "spirit, soul and body." This we regard as a violation of our third rule for the interpretation of parables. We think the number three has no significance, so far as the design of the parable is concerned, which is to show the active, progressive thorough working power of the gospel. As the three measures amounted to nearly twelve quarts and a half, the quantity may be named because it was the amount which constituted the most common family baking. Or it may be that it constituted a very large baking, and was designed to give force to the illustration from the fact that one lump of leaven should leaven the whole of so large a quantity of meal. Beyond some such significance the quantity is unimportant to the sense and force of the parable.

The parable of the Mustard-seed, Matt. xiii. 31, 32, furnishes another illustration. The subject is the same as the former, denoting the progress of the gospel in the world, or the work of grace in the heart. The illustration, a mustard-seed, is perfectly plain to all, according to rule two, with this exception; namely, the size of the plant or rather the tree. Mustard in Palestine was perennial, and was a number of years old before it produced fruit, and grew as large as a fig tree. Until this fact is understood, historically, the force of the parable is not felt, though it was perfectly plain to all at the time and place of its delivery.

We will give one more illustration. The case of the man who fell among thieves, relieved by the good Samaritan, recorded, Luke x. 30-37, is full of beauty and instruction. This may be a parable or a relation of an actual occurrence. It does not matter which, a parable is always based upon what has taken place, or

what may take place. The main subject here, is the duty of man to man. It is a comment upon the great precept, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." The caviling lawyer inquired, "Who is my neighbor;" and Christ answered by telling this touching story. The whole design was to point out a neighbor by his conduct, and when this was so done as to make the lawyer see and feel and own the truth on the subject, the end was reached, and beyond this the story has no significance or spiritual meaning. How was it perverted then, and our third rule violated, in a sermon which we once heard preached upon the subject? In this sermon the subject was treated as an allegory, in which the man denoted sinners in their fallen condition, the thieves sin and satan; the priest, the moral law; the levite the ceremonial law; passed by on the other side, could not relieve; the Samaritan, Christ; oil, pardoning mercy; wine, the consolations of the Spirit; set him on his own beast, supported him by his grace; the inn, the church; the two pence, the Old and New Testaments; what might be spent more to be repaid, the final reward of all who do God's will and work. If Christ had told the story to illustrate the great plan of human salvation, it might have furnished an excuse for such an exposition, but it was told as a simple answer to the question, "Who is my neighbor?" and hence it is an illustration of neighborly conduct, and this its significance is limited.

We will close this article with a brief notice of the case of the rich man and Lazarus, recorded Luke xvi. 19-31.

This has been called a parable by some, and by others it has been regarded as a statement of what actually transpired. Whether it be a parable or not, is not the point to be discussed. The only point is the principle of interpretation upon the assumption that it is a parable. Under our first rule, we inquire what is the subject illustrated and enforced by it? This is known from what precedes it. Christ taught the danger of the love of money; the deceitfulness of riches, that what is highly esteemed among men is hateful to God; that we are accountable for the use we make of our property, and that it is the duty of men to show kindness to each other, and especially to the poor; and, finally, that it is not the outward appearance and circumstances

that determines the character and destiny of man, but the state of the heart. To improve all these was the design, and to enforce them against the Pharisees who were covetous, and who derided him for his remarks. To reach this end the contrast between the very rich man and the very poor man, was well adapted.

The illustration is a plain one, according to our second rule. It is founded upon the commonly received doctrine among the Jews of future rewards and punishments. But suppose there be no such thing as conscious existence after death, no such place as heaven, and no such place as hell; and Christ is represented as attempting to illustrate and enforce important principles and duties, by what has no existence, never had, and never can have. Assume, as some have, that the rich man represents the rejected Jews, and that Lazarus represents the adopted Gentiles in the enjoyment of gospel privileges, and still it is by heaven and hell that the condition of these two classes is represented, and the state of christians is compared to the bliss of saints in heaven, and the state of the rejected Jews is compared to the punishment of the wicked in hell after death, and we still have the plain literal illustration, as demanded by our second rule.

THE MIND AND PREACHING.

Without undervaluing eminent religious attainments, we are constrained to affirm that the great means of obtaining variety in pulpit instruction consists in mental culture and application, for it is the mind that is primarily employed in preaching. There must be study—intellectual effort. The minister cannot expect that God will help him in this work if he do not help himself. Indolence, in this respect, involves a violation of a law of the divine government, and no blessing can be reasonably looked for while it is indulged in. It is where mental exertion is found that piety comes in and affords the aid of experience, and renders more intense the efforts of the intellect. She calms, soothes and equalizes one's whole nature, and thus surrounds the mind with a clear at-

mosphere, through which its eye can gaze forth upon the field of truth. So that, other things being equal, that mind which is associated with, and under the influence of ardent piety, is safest, clearest and mightiest in its workings. The epistles of Paul, inspired though they were, give evidence not only that piety glowed like fire in his soul, and thus administered an unwonted energy to the movements of his intellect, but that he has enjoyed a large culture, and that he by no means allowed his powers to run to waste. He doubtless practiced himself what he recommended to Timothy, and studied "to show himself approved of God, a workman that needed not be ashamed, rightly dividing the work of truth." In other words, he made it a matter of thought, solicitude and study, how he could, in the most effectual manner, exhibit the truths which he had been commissioned by Christ to teach. He knew that the science of religion was, in many respects, like every other science, and that he who bestowed the most thought and attention upon it, in connection with the best aids at his command, would unquestionably have the most copious and comprehensive views of it. So those who have since been most successful in the ministry, especially in the pastoral office, have been characterized by a similar application of the mind to the great themes of religion. Jonathan Edwards was remarkable in this respect; and while his piety did much for him, the world would never have been blessed by his immortal theological treatises had he not directed his mind to the elucidation of divine truth by a rigid devotion to study. The same may be affirmed of Fuller, Hull, Chalmers, Emmons, and a host of others. Indeed, every man who has occupied the same pulpit for a long series of years, has been obliged to have recourse to mental application. This has, in every such instance, been one secret of his maintaining his position, for it would have been impossible for him to have done so, on any other terms. The variety in his instructions which enabled him to retain the respect of his people, and his hold upon their minds and hearts, has been secured only by keeping the brain actively employed.

We are disposed to lay stress upon this point; but, we trust, not an undue one. Notwithstanding the high moral aims of the preacher, and that divine assistance which is promised him, his

work is emphatically an intellectual work, and demands the earnest employment of the mind. In this way one can range through the broad field of religious truth, and present any variety of interesting combination. Mental discipline and fruitfulness of conception, especially if coupled with ardent piety, place a man upon a lofty eminence, from which he sees a bright sun shining with an eternal splendor, and shedding its light upon the vast landscape spread out before him in its innumerable and diversified parts. They give him an eagle eye, so that from his proud elevation he can not only behold the great, the fundamental, the strongly marked features of the prospect, but he can also see the nicer, the more delicate, and the more remote objects, which conspire to give fullness and beauty to the spectacle. Such qualifications enable the Christian minister to dwell in a world of thought, in which there shall ever be new beauties to please the eye, and new pleasures to delight the soul.—*Rev. Wm. C. Child, in Christian Review.*

INFIDELITY IS BASED UPON IGNORANCE.

The gospel needs only to be deeply studied and understood to be believed and loved. Infidels never thoroughly study it, and are generally very ignorant in regard to its doctrines and moral teachings. All infidel writers, who make attacks upon revelation, in those very attacks not only expose their ignorance of the contents and claims of the Scriptures, but also reveal a deep-rooted, yet groundless prejudice against them, which prevents them from understanding them. This is well illustrated in the reply of Sir Isaac Newton to Dr. Halley. Dr. Halley the great mathematician, was fond of displaying his infidel views. Once when he had descanted freely upon the subject of religion, showing his disbelief of the Scriptures, in the presence of Sir Isaac Newton, the latter replied to him by saying: "I always attend to you, Dr. Halley, with the greatest deference, when you do us the honor to

converse on the subject of astronomy or the mathematics, because these are subjects you have investigated, and which you well understand ; but religion is a subject on which I always hear you with pain, because it is one which you have not seriously examined, and therefore do not understand ; you despise it because you have not studied it, and you will not study it because you despise it."

The above rebuke would suit infidels generally, for they are usually notoriously ignorant of the Gospel while they despise it. This is because their hearts are opposed to the moral instructions of the Scriptures, and to the duties they demand, and not because there is no interest in them as a merely human composition. There is as much amusement in the Bible as in any other history. It contains a great variety of prudential instruction ; it abounds with sublimity and poetry ; but the reader who does not look beyond these, stops short of its great end. He only studies the Bible effectually who finds Christ therein, "the way, the truth, and the life."

TRUE ORIGINALITY IN CHRISTIAN DISCOURSE.*

Every new volume of sermons now-a-days is advertised as being "original," by which is commonly meant that they contain new and brilliant thoughts, expressed in a piquant style, and with the individuality of the author strongly displayed. In Christian discourses this kind of originality is anything but desirable. It is only as a man is freed by the grace of God from every form of self-admiration and self-satisfaction, in view of his own gifts, that genuine originality in the sphere of Christian homiletics can ever exist. Whenever there is the slightest evidence of indulging in rhetorical ornament for the sake of popular applause, as so often appears in the sermons of young preachers of considerable ability, the speaker "has his reward," but the vital and sav-

* Translated from the *Dorpater Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche*. *Hef* II, 1863.

ing power of the sermon is gone. Genuine originality, in the true Christian sense, can exist only on condition that the preacher die to self and become possessed with the spirit of Christ. This freedom from self by no means involves the sacrifice of the preacher's native individuality ; on the contrary it imparts to that individuality a sacred consecration, and emancipates it from every obstacle which would embarrass him in being fully possessed with the great object to be exhibited. The condition of true Christian originality is negatively, self-forgetfulness and self-denial ; positively, the being controlled *within* by the power of the truth. Nothing but sanctified littleness begets true greatness. Whoever feels it necessary to add to the Word of Life—the matter contained in the Bible—even but a single grain of excitants furnished by himself, in order to make his sermon more fresh and effective, has never learned in the school of the Spirit ; his words come not from the right source, his witness, in part at least, expires with the breath that utters it, and has no permanent and substantial effect. Whoever, on the other hand, declares God's word *only*, and is determined to preach nothing else, because he has learned from his own experience to despair of his own wisdom ; whoever has Christ, the eternal and living Word of God, formed in his soul, is made alive, that is, *original* ; because the life from which he draws is the *original life*, and because he is now associated with it, through his preaching, in the work of the new creation, and can say with Paul—the motto for all Christian originality—"I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me."—*Theological Eclectic*.

PREACH CHRIST.

The best sermon is that which is fullest of Christ. A Welsh minister who was preaching last Sabbath at the chapel of my dear brother, Jonathan George, was saying that Christ was the sum and substance of the gospel, and he broke out into this story :—A young man had been preaching in the presence of a venerable divine, and after he had done he went to the old minister,

and said, "What do you think of my sermon?" "A very poor sermon indeed," said he. "A poor sermon!" said the young man, "it took me a long time to study it." "Ay, no doubt of it." "Why, did you not think my explanation of the text a very good one?" "Oh yes," said the old preacher, "very good indeed." "Well, then, why do you say it is a poor sermon? Didn't you think the metaphors were appropriate and the arguments conclusive?" "Yes, they were very good as far as that goes, but still it was a very poor sermon." "Will you tell me why you think it a poor sermon?" "Because," said he, "there was no Christ in it." "Well," said the young man, "Christ was not in the text; we are not to be preaching Christ always, we must preach what is in the text." So the old man said, "Don't you know, young man, that from every town, and every village, and every little hamlet in England, wherever it may be, there is a road to London?" "Yes," said the young man. "Ah," said the old divine, "and so from every text in Scripture, there is a road to the metropolis of the Scriptures, that is Christ. And, my dear brother, your business is when you get to a text, to say, 'Now, what is the road to Christ?' and then preach a sermon, running along the road towards the great metropolis—Christ. And," said he, "I have never yet found a text that had not got a road to Christ in it, and if I ever do find one that has not a road to Christ in it, I will make one; I will go over hedge and ditch but I would get at my Master, for the sermon cannot do any good unless there is a savour of Christ in it."—*C. H. Spurgeon.*

PERSONALITIES IN THE PULPIT.

No minister should allow himself to be personal in the pulpit. If individuals are to be reached by special attention to them, or to their conduct, it should be done by private labor. Yet no minister should fail to preach plainly and against every evil through a fear of being regarded as personal. Men sometimes take as personal and as especially aimed at them, what is uttered without personal allusion to any one. Those who take every pointed remark as intended for them, are generally most worthy of them. The reason is, they know better than others what they deserve.

THE TRANSFIGURATION OF CHRIST.

“And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into a high mountain, apart. And was transfigured before them; and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light. And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias, talking with him. Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: If thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, one for Moses, and one for Elias. While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and, behold, a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him. And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their faces, and were sore afraid. And Jesus came and touched them, and said, Arise, and be not afraid. And when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, save Jesus only.”—MATT. XVII. 1-8.

The sermon will not be proportioned to the text in length or grandeur.

The vision was awfully sublime, and defies all attempts of the most brilliant imagination to embellish it.

All that can be done with such a text, is to point out the important ends which it was designed to secure.

This vision, I have no doubt, sustained an important relation to the Saviour's mission.

I will attempt to point out three important ends which I believe it was designed to answer.

I. The transfiguration was God's official inauguration of his Son, as the universal and supreme teacher of humanity; and it was done with appropriate solemnities.

The world had been under two classes of teachers, the Law and the Prophets, represented by Moses and Elijah.

Fifteen hundred years the law had rule, and taken its contributions of blood and incense.

Fifteen hundred years the prophets had waved their wand over the ranks of Israel, and poured the voice of God upon their dull ears.

This system was now to be abolished, and Moses and Elijah to be superseded by Christ, the great teacher.

Such a change demanded solemn and imposing formalities.

Let us notice the principal facts in this inauguration.

1. Three witnesses were selected, and withdrawn from the multitude to a secluded place.

Peter, James and John were these chosen witnesses, who also were witnesses of his agony in the garden.

Three witnesses were sufficient in law to establish any fact.

The whole transaction was too hallowed to admit of the presence of the common throng.

As the divine visible presence was hid by the veil from the gaze of vulgar eyes, so, when Christ revealed his glory, it was done in seclusion with only the three chosen witnesses.

2. Christ was transfigured ; that is, changed in appearance.

His face shone as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light.

This brightness of glory constituted his glorious robes of office in which he was inaugurated.

3. Moses and Elijah, here called Elias, were present on the occasion, representing the law and the prophets.

Both the law and the prophets had their fulfillment in Christ ; hence, Moses and Elijah were present to resign their commissions into his official hands.

4. A bright cloud overshadowed them, that is, covered them.

This cloud was a symbol of the divine presence.

God journeyed with the Israelites in a cloud.

God gave the law in a cloud on the mount.

5. A voice came out of the cloud, saying, " This is my beloved Son, hear ye him."

This voice gave the inaugurating charge.

In the presence of Moses and Elijah, God owns his Son as supreme teacher, saying, " hear ye him."

6. When the disciples arose from their awe-stricken position, they saw no one but Jesus, whom they had been commanded to hear.

How significant was this ? The command was given, " hear ye him ;" the vision closed, Moses and Elijah were gone, the cloud vanished, and they were alone with Jesus to think of and obey the command they had received, " hear ye him."

II. The transfiguration of Christ was a clear and certain proof of the divinity of his mission, and his religion.

1. The circumstances exclude the possibility of deception or mistake.

Three witnesses saw and heard the same things.

This was lawful testimony.

2. Two of these witnesses left each a distinct record of his testimony.

John wrote his Gospel about fifty years after, and has recorded his testimony thus :

“The word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father.” John i. 14.

Peter wrote his second epistle about thirty years after, in which he has recorded his testimony as follows :—

“For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father honor and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, ‘This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.’ And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount.” 2 Peter i. 16–18.

This is an appeal to the scene on the mount, as proof of the divinity of the Christian religion.

III. The transfiguration of Christ was a demonstration of a future state.

1. The appearance of Moses proves the immortality of the soul.

Moses died and was buried in the land of Moab, nearly fifteen hundred years before.

2. The appearance of Elijah represented the resurrection body.

He went to heaven more than nine hundred years before.

He doubtless underwent the change which all will, who shall be living when the dead shall be raised.

When the dead are raised the living will be changed, so as to conform them to the resurrection state.

3. The transfigured body of Christ may have represented the pattern after which our bodies will be modeled.

The appearance was doubtless that of his own future body, to which all the saints will be conformed.

“Who shall change our vile bodies that they may be fashioned

like unto his glorious body, according to the working, whereby he is able to subdue all things unto himself." Phil. iii. 21.

What a pattern was that glorious body for our future bodies?

"His face shone as the sun," hence we read of heaven:

"And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it; the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof." Rev. xxi. 23.

How grand must have been the scene upon the mount?

How glorious will heaven be, when each saint shall bask in the sunshine of the Redeemer's glory, and reflect the same?

"But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory." 2 Cor. iii. 18.

I will close my protracted discourse with only three brief remarks.

1. The subject should inspire deep reverence, and even awe, in christian assemblies.

This same Jesus, whose glory set the mount in a blaze, has promised to be present in all christian assemblies.

"Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." Matt. xviii. 20.

If we are here in his name, he is here now though unseen.

If he is here, as all christians believe, he is the same glorious being here that he was on the mount.

What reverence should it inspire?

How do thoughtless, rude and profane sinners expose themselves in his presence?

2. The subject will enable us better to appreciate the Saviour's prayer for his disciples.

"Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory." John xvii. 24.

The glory which was seen for a moment by Peter, James, and John, is reserved for all the saints in one eternal vision.

3. The subject throws some light upon the future glory of the saints.

Luke says, "Behold there talketh with him two men, which were Moses and Elias, who appeared in glory." Luke ix. 30.

They were doubtless clad in their heavenly garments.
So shall all the saints appear in glory in the future world.

“ Arrayed in glorious grace,
Shall these vile bodies shine ;
And every shape, and every face
Look heavenly and divine.”

Look up, ye who trust in Jesus, from these dusty scenes of earth, and fix the eye of faith upon the bright and abiding objects of that future home which the Redeemer has gone to prepare for his saints.

THE ADVANTAGES OF PUBLIC WORSHIP.

“ I was glad when they said unto me, let us go into the house of the Lord.”
—PSALM CXXII. 1.

Some suppose this is the language of the captive Israelites, in view of the proclamation for their return from Babylon.

It clearly expresses the feelings of all devout hearts, on being called to join an assembly of saints in the house of God.

In this sense I propose to consider it, and hope we may all appreciate it.

To be glad, is to be pleased, to be joyful.

I propose then to consider the reasons why an invitation to join in the exercises of the house of God, should inspire gladness.

1. There is personal pleasure in worship.

In true devotion, there is communion with God.

There is also instruction in the house of God ; here we obtain the clearest views of God, and of human duty, and human destiny.

These enjoyments are increased by the social principle developed in devotion.

When deprived of these enjoyments, the soul sighs for them.

One said, “ A day in thy courts is better than a thousand.” Psal. lxxxiv. 10.

In these enjoyments the human mind receives its highest satisfaction this side of heaven.

"My willing soul would stay
 In such a frame as this,
 And sit and sing herself away
 To everlasting bliss."

2. There is personal profit in devotion, the means and element of human progress.

It preserves the fire of devotion on domestic altars, and in individual hearts.

It gives strength to resist evil, and endure labor and trials.

It inspires comfort in the heart of affliction and sorrow.

It awakens courage to brave the dangers and storms of life.

It quickens hope to lay hold upon the realities of the world of substance.

It is written, "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength." Isa. xl. 31.

3. In the house of God is found our greatest public weal.

Every patriot, every lover of his country, should make it his first business to attend and support the house of God.

Every other element of prosperity is unavailing, without the blessing of God.

God's blessing can be looked for only where he is publicly acknowledged and worshiped.

If every neighborhood had its house dedicated to the name of God, and all the people were devout worshipers, we should have no cause to fear for our national existence.

The influence of the house of God is greater for the suppression of vice, than penal laws.

Commencing its work with the children in the Sunday School, it pours forth its influence like healing waters upon the sin-marr'd face of human society, enlightening, reforming, and guiding.

No other form of effort can do so much good with so little outlay.

What is expended in maintaining the house of God is better than so much money at interest.

How little are farms and other property worth where there is no house of God, and no christianity?

Well indeed was it said, "I was glad when they said unto me, let us go into the house of the Lord."

REMARKS.

1. How few appear to appreciate the advantages of God's house ?

How few attend divine service ?

Where are the many this hour, and how are they engaged ?

But are the few that attend all true worshipers ?

Are they glad of the occasion ?

Or do they come because they have no excuse for staying away ?

True worshipers long for the day and the hour.

"When the worn spirit seeks repose,
And sighs its God to meet,
How sweet to hail the evening's close,
That ends the weary week."

2. The text is suggestive of the interest we should feel in the attendance of others on the house of God.

It supposes a call or an invitation to go into the house of God.

"I was glad when they said unto me," &c.

We ought to invite and urge our friends and neighbors to go with us to the sanctuary.

Some may refuse, but others will accept of the invitation, and being brought under the influence of the gospel, may be saved.

Such will be glad, for ever glad.

What a deep and thrilling interest then clusters around every place of worship, and every public altar ?

Every such place is heaven's way-mark, heaven's primary department, and heaven's outer door.

GOD'S TIME TO WORK.

"It is time for thee, Lord, to work, for they have made void thy law."—PSAL. CIX. 126.

The Psalmist had a great love for the Law of God, yet he saw it fearfully violated all around him.

He considered that the honor of God required him to vindicate the authority of his law.

The same may appear to be the case now, but God is the judge.

I. THE STATE OF THINGS IMPLIED.

“Have made void thy law.”

They disregard, they violate it.

It does not mean to annul.

They make void,

1. By rejecting it as false.

2. By substituting something else.

3. By disobeying it.

II. THE OCCASION IT FURNISHES FOR GOD TO WORK.

1. Human weakness is more forcibly felt and readily owned, at such times.

2. The hand of God is more visibly seen, and readily confessed at such times.

3. A display of divine power and grace at such a time, leaves a deeper impression on the mind.

III. THE INSTRUMENTALITIES WHICH GOD EMPLOYS.

1. The Spirit is the first great energy which God uses.

It is by this that he moves and invigorates every other agent.

2. God uses human agents.

We must be conformed to his will to be used by him.

If we will not allow God to use us, he will raise up others.

3. God usually begins his work in the church, and fits it for usefulness.

REMARKS.

1. In human sight it is now time for God to work.

His law is made void all around us.

Sinners are not ashamed.

If the present generation of sinners are ever saved, they must be saved soon.

2. It is time for christians to put themselves in a position where God can use them.

Are you ready?

Should God send a sinner to you, asking you to pray for him, would God find in you a fit and ready instrument for his work?

3. In the light of all the facts, how encouraging it is to know that the work belongs to God.

“It is time for thee, Lord, to work.”

Human weakness is great but God is powerful.

Foes may be numerous and powerful, but God is more powerful.

Times may be dark, but God can shine out of darkness.

When clouds hang in the greatest darkness, shutting out the light of heaven, they may be distilling the greatest blessings, requiring only contrary winds to shake and divide them that their blessings may fall.

THE UNIVERSAL OFFER OF SALVATION.

“It shall come to pass that whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.”—Acts II. 21.

The text is a quotation from Joel, chapter ii. 28, 29.

The prophecy includes the overthrow of the Jewish nation and polity.

The deliverance of believers in Christ, is the fact stated in the text.

But the same is true of salvation in regard to all men.

We then have in the text

I. A UNIVERSAL TENDER OF SALVATION ; AND

II. A CLEAR STATEMENT OF THE TERMS.

I. A UNIVERSAL TENDER OF SALVATION.

Whosoever shall call, &c.

This word is unlimited in its application.

Any person that calls on the name of the Lord.

1. There is no limitation in regard to nation, tribe, or ancestry.
2. There is no limitation in regard to mental capacity or acquirements.
3. There is no limitation in regard to temporal circumstances or worldly position.
4. There is no limitation as respects age or sex.
5. There is no limitation in regard to moral antecedents or previous moral character and conduct.

"Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord, shall be saved."

II. A CLEAR STATEMENT OF THE TERMS.

The door is open to all, and the terms are the same to all.

But what are the terms?

We must call on the name of the Lord.

Calling is but another term for praying.

1. Calling supposes weakness, helplessness, dependence.

This is the case where relief is the object of calling, as in this text.

2. Calling supposes danger or evil to be removed.

Sin and its guilt and punishment constitute the danger, the evil to be removed.

3. Calling supposes great earnestness.

If sinners saw and felt their condition, they would cry mightily to God, "Lord save or I perish."

4. Calling supposes faith, some degree of confidence in God.

God's word is pledged, "Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved."

There is no *may be*, in the case, it is, *shall be saved*.

No person ever did call in sincere earnestness, without being saved, and never will, while Christ is on the throne.

Unbelief is madness; it contradicts what God says; it dares to dispute Jehovah.

REMARKS.

1. Have we not reason to believe that there is much formal prayer, where there is no real calling upon the name of the Lord?

How many use words of prayer, who are not saved?

They do not call, or the word fails.

2. There is no excuse for sinners, if they are not saved the fault is theirs.

The offer is universal.

The terms are easy.

No price beyond our means is required.

"Call," with heart, and soul, and voice.

3. To be successful we must call in season—"Call upon him while he is near."

AN EARNEST APPEAL TO SINNERS.

"We then as workers together with him, beseech you also, that ye receive not the grace of God in vain."—2 COR. VI. 1.

"We," denotes Paul and Timothy.

By implication it includes all Gospel ministers.

"With him," refers to God.

This view gives great force to the labors of a true minister, as he is a worker together with God.

By the grace of God, is meant God's gracious offers of salvation.

With Paul, it was clear that this grace might be received in vain.

Sinners may defeat the whole Gospel plan, so far as their own salvation is concerned.

How solemn the import of the text; we, ministers, beseech you, hearers, as workers with God, that ye receive not the grace of God in vain.

The mutual responsibility of ministers and hearers is the leading thought suggested by the view of the text already given.

I. THE POSITION OF THE MINISTER IS A FEARFULLY RESPONSIBLE ONE.

They are workers together with God.

1. They are workers, not idlers.

Not merely overseers, not silent inactive partners, but *workers*.

They are preachers, and must labor.

They are God's watchmen, and must watch, and warn when danger comes.

They are Christ's under shepherds, and must feed and guide and defend the flock.

To all of this, add the proper sense of responsibility which they should feel, and they are workers indeed.

2. They are workers *together with God*.

They work for God, under his direction, and for the promotion of his glory.

By themselves they accomplish nothing, but working with God, they can accomplish much.

They preach the letter of the word, but God is its spirit and power.

They address the ear, God the heart.

They enlighten the mind by God's truth, but God renews the heart by his power.

They direct the sinner's eye to the victim on the cross, but Christ there atones for their sins, and God, for his sake, pardons.

They cry in the ears of men that the world is passing away, and point them upward to the sky, but God lets down his golden chain of saving power, and draws them upward to his throne, from amid the ruins of a perishing world.

Thus are ministers workers together with God, he using them as his appointed instrumentalities.

II. THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE PEOPLE IS RELATIVELY GREAT WITH THAT OF THE MINISTRY.

1. The design of the ministry, is the salvation of the people.

In proportion then to the responsibility of the ministry, must be the responsibility of the people.

As ministers are workers together with God, the people resist God, and pervert his blessing, when they reject the word preached.

2. The labors of the ministry, working together with God, renders eternal salvation possible ; yet may the people, by their own fault, receive the whole offer in vain, and perish.

The whole responsibility of life and death is with those to whom the Gospel is preached.

They may receive the grace of God in vain.

This result may be achieved in various ways.

All who will not come and hear the Gospel preached, receive the grace of God in vain.

All who come to hear, and do not hear, but sit with listless ears receive the grace of God in vain.

All who do not obey the Gospel when they have heard, receive the grace of God in vain.

This last remark should be applied to backsliders of every degree.

How fearful is the work of defeating God's grace in its work of salvation.

Receive the grace of God in vain, and you render God's infinite love in vain also.

Receive the grace of God in vain, and you render the sufferings of Christ in vain, his sweat and blood and dying agony are all in vain.

Receive the grace of God in vain, and the efforts of the Holy Spirit are rendered in vain.

Receive the grace of God in vain, and you render all the labors of the ministry in vain also.

Receive the grace of God in vain, and you defeat your own salvation and must perish.

How should ministers rouse themselves and beseech the people not to receive the grace of God in vain?

When sermon after sermon appears lost, and week after week, month after month, and year after year passes, and the flock is made no better, perhaps is growing worse, he may well beseech them.

Will you hear me this once, while I plead against this fatal course?

I beseech you by all that can interest immortal beings.

By the love of God your Maker—

By the love of Christ your Redeemer—

By the wooings of the Holy Spirit—

By the Gospel of your salvation—

By the mission I bear as the ambassador of Christ—

By the account you have to render.

THE CROSS.

“The cross is the distinguishing glory of Christianity. It was prefigured by the types and sacrifices of the old economy. The Lord’s supper points back to it. It is the greatest display of Divine love which has been given to the universe. It is the fullest provision for the spiritual wants and moral maladies of man. Some in modern times preach a cold, dry, lifeless morality, rather than the cross of Jesus. Paul preached the cross as the best means of promoting true morality. Paul gloried in the cross, and he gloried in preaching the cross.”

BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION.

HOW TO ASCERTAIN THE LITERAL MEANING OF WORDS.

1. All words are to be understood as literal, that cannot be clearly demonstrated to be figurative.

The literal meaning of words is the most common meaning, and is never to be departed from without obvious necessity.

2. When words have more than one meaning, the most common one is always to be taken, unless there is a good reason for adopting some other less common meaning. That sense which a word most commonly has is to be preferred, when the subject and context will admit of it.

3. General usage alone determines what meanings words have, and which of them is the most common meaning. No intelligent author departs from common usage in the use of words, without giving notice of the special sense in which he uses them. So far as this is done by a writer, his communication becomes obscure, and its sense doubtful. Every author expects the words he uses will be construed according to common usage, unless he gives notice that he wishes them understood in a different sense. This rule applies to the Scriptures; the sacred writers have used language with as much accuracy as uninspired men.

To settle the question of usage in regard to the sense of words, the sense in which authors have most commonly used them, is proof; but main reliance is placed upon definition, given by authors who have written expressly on the subject. Notwithstanding the war among linguists for rivalry, there is a remarkable agreement among them, in regard to the meaning of words. Suppose we wish to determine the meaning of a single word, if we have access to the works, we will look into Bailey's Dictionary, then into Johnson's, Sheridan's, Walker's, Webster's and Worcester's, and if we find an agreement of these authors, we cannot doubt that we have the true signification of the word.

4. When words have more than one meaning, giving rise to the question, which of two or more meanings a word has in a given case, it must be settled by the nature of the subject, and the sense of the other words with which it stands connected. A

glance at the general subject, and at the harmony of the combination of words, will in ninety-nine cases out of every hundred, suggest the true sense of every individual word. The facility with which we do this, is truly wonderful. Most words which we use have more than one meaning, and yet we discover, almost intuitively, which meaning each word has in all the combinations in which we find them, as the eye glances along each line, and down the page we read. Notwithstanding all that may be said and felt on the subject of indefiniteness of the meaning of single words, the power to combine and determine the sense of each word from the combination, above noted, renders language almost as definite as it would be, if each word had one definite sense and no other.

5. If in any cases, the subject itself is too little understood to enable us to determine the meaning of the words used to state it, there will usually be found examples which define the subject, and thus give us a key to the subject, and to the meaning of the words employed to describe it. Let us illustrate this, "Pray for them which despitefully use you." Matt. v. 44. "He spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray and not to faint." Luke xviii. 1. If these texts constituted all that is written on the subject, it might be difficult to determine the meaning of the word *pray*, from the nature of the subject, or from the combination of words, but the Scriptures are full of examples of prayer. "After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven," &c. "Two men went up into the temple to pray," one of these men said, "God be merciful to me a sinner." The words of Solomon's prayer are recorded; the words of Daniel's prayer are recorded; the words of some of Christ's prayers are recorded. These and a hundred other examples, render it easy to understand the meaning of the word prayer; it is asking God for such blessings as we need.

The same rule will apply to the subject of faith. The Scriptures insist upon faith as a fundamental virtue, and yet if we were left to simple definitions of the word, we might find it difficult to determine its nature with sufficient certainty. But we have abundant examples of the exercise of faith, which throw light on the subject.

A diseased woman, "said within herself, if I may but touch his garment, I shall be made whole." She touched his garment and was healed. Jesus said unto her, "Daughter be of good comfort, thy faith hath made the whole." Matt. ix. 20-22. Her faith was her assurance of mind that she should be made whole if she touched him.

The centurion said, "I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof; but speak the word only and my servant shall be healed. Jesus said, Verily, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel." Matt. viii. 8-10. His faith was, his belief and sure trust that Christ could heal his servant by a word spoken where he was, without going to see him.

These illustrations borrowed from prayer and faith, have been introduced as mere specimens, to explain a general principle. The rule is good for every other subject connected with practice. Every principle involving human duty, or practical religion, is drawn out in living examples in the Scriptures, and these examples explain the command, and clearly suggest the right definition of the principle words in which they are stated, so that men who seek truth and the path of duty will find them.

6. Where any difficulty exists in determining the true meaning of a text, or of the words of any text, we may gain light by carefully comparing it with parallel passages. A parallel passage is one which relates to the same subject. The same sentiment may have been expressed in other words, at some other time, on some other occasion, and by some other person of equal authority, and if so, these other expressions of the same sentiment, constitute parallel passages, and they help to explain each other. Where one of these passages may appear obscure, the other may be plain, and by a comparison, we may reach an understanding of the whole subject of which they all treat.

But care must be taken not to confound texts in our comparisons, which are not parallel. By explaining one text by another, as parallel, which is not parallel, the greatest errors are often perpetrated. By pursuing this course, some persons pretend to disprove the doctrine of a future judgment, by explaining those passages which teach it, by those which clearly speak of judg-

ments inflicted in this life. So some pretend to disprove the doctrine of punishment after death, by explaining these texts which teach it by those which treat of punishment in this life. The Scriptures teach that sinners often suffer on account of their sins in this life, but to seize upon the texts which teach this as parallel to those which as clearly teach that sinners are in danger of punishment after death, to explain away the doctrine of punishment after death, is absurd in the highest degree. In the same manner some have pretended to disprove the doctrine of the resurrection of the human body. They find that the words death and resurrection are sometimes applied to moral and even political changes of persons and nations, and seizing upon these texts as parallel to those which treat of the general resurrection, they easily explain away that great event, and turn the slumbers of the grave into an eternal dreamless sleep. They assume a parallelism where none exists, and then draw a conclusion from one class of texts, true in itself, but falsely apply it to the other class of texts, which treats of another subject. Such interpretations are full of error and danger.

THE ELEMENTS OF SUCCESS.

To be a successful minister must be the highest aim of every one, who with honest purpose, takes upon himself the sacred office. To assume to go to the people in the name of God, with a message of salvation, and yet to be indifferent in regard to the success of our mission, must be a fearful crime. Every honest minister must greatly desire success in his work. Yet does every one consider and comprehend what is essential to success? It is feared they do not. Does every one do what appears to be essential to success? it is feared they do not. Some may come short for want of clear views in regard to those points in ministerial character which constitute the elements of success. Let us then inquire, what are the elements of success?

1. Intelligence, knowledge, is one element which, other things

being equal, will promote success. We do not say knowledge alone will give success, much else is needed, but it is an important item. The doctrinal truths need to be well understood, for these are the foundation of the whole system of Gospel salvation. If these are omitted, obscured or perverted, the system will appear broken, cloudy or absurd. All christian duty should be well understood. The minister cannot explain and enforce the duties of christianity, only so far as he understands them himself. The matter of christian experience must be well understood by the minister, or he cannot so preach as to lead sinners to Christ, encourage and strengthen the fearful and weak, and search out and explode false hopes and hypocritical pretensions. To all this strictly religious knowledge, a general knowledge of the sciences, and of men and things, will give great force. Knowledge, then, is one element of success.

2. Earnestness is an essential element of ministerial success. We must distinguish between true earnestness, and a mere frothy zeal, which consists of noise and distortions of body. Earnestness includes a sufficiently deep and loud tone of voice, yet it does not consist of mere volume of sound. Some of the most earnest and effective preachers we ever heard, were incapable of making a great noise, from weakness of voice, but their souls were in earnest, and that earnestness used what voice they had to the best advantage, and with great power. Earnestness is not mere pant, it lies deeper, true earnestness has its seat in the heart; when that is stirred, the eye will flash it out, and the intonations of the voice will tell it, and the hearer will feel it.

3. Boldness, which gives directness and point, is another element of success. Indefinite generalizations that hit nowhere, and touch nobody, do but little good. They may strike a spark of light here and there, but they never extort the earnest inquiry, "what shall I do to be saved?"

It is necessary to distinguish between true boldness, that dares to speak God's truth in the face of offenders, regardless of personal considerations, and saucy impudence, and vulgar abuse of a congregation. It is not necessary to be coarse, vulgar, or abusive, in order to be plain, faithful, direct and bold. To be bold in a true sense, is to present truth when and where it is

most needed, and where, if circumstances demand, it is most unpopular, and awakens most opposition. It cannot require a large share of courage to stand up and affirm what all will consent to, what all are pleased to hear. But the minister must be sufficiently bold to say to sinners all that is necessary they should embrace and do in order to be saved. Be sure to preach the truth in love and pity, but preach it plainly and directly, and dare, as far as possible, to drive it home to the hearer's understanding and conscience. Tear the veil from the sinner's heart, and let him see himself, hold the Gospel mirror before his eyes, and flash his own moral likeness back upon his conscious soul. Some may fall out with such a preacher, but others will fall out with themselves and their sins.

4. Deep, earnest piety, communion with God, is the crowning element of success in a minister. Without this, talents shine in vain, knowledge is powerless, earnestness is but little more than mechanical action, and boldness approaches too nearly to professional affront. There is and can be no substitute for piety, no artificial zeal can supply the lack of communion with God. The life of God in the soul, the breathing of the Holy Spirit through the preacher, gives tone and power to the truths he utters, its light is flashed upon the understanding of the hearers, its claims seizes upon their consciences, and under its influence their hearts melt, their wills are subdued, and the work of reformation is begun. Many things, more than we have named, may contribute to success, but this is the great thing, it is the indispensable element of ministerial success.

CHRISTMAS EVANS AND WELSH PREACHING.*

Welsh preaching is as great a mystery to an Englishman as the Welsh language. He has heard of it as something little short of the miraculous; but as he is ignorant of the language, he is

*Somewhat abridged from the (London) *Christian Spectator* for September, 1863.

not able to analyze it nor to put himself in the place of the hearer, and to judge for himself of its power. Yet he is assured on good authority, that it is immeasurably superior to the best English preaching ; and, remembering that the English pulpit can boast of a Hall, a Chalmers and a Melville, he begins to suppose, that Welsh preaching must be superhuman—something to which the angels would like to listen if Welsh were but the language of Paradise. It cannot be translated, it can not be reproduced in an English form : the beauty, the inexplicable charm, vanishes if you attempt to convey it through any other medium.

One of the men to whom the Welsh pulpit owes some of its principal glory, is Christmas Evans. He was born on Christmas Day, 1766, at a village called Llandyssul, prettily situated among the Cardiganshire hills. His father was a shoemaker, and does not seem to have been distinguished among men of his class ; nor does it appear that his mother had any extraordinary endowment that will account for the remarkable ability of her distinguished son. The father dying when Christmas was only nine years old, he had no education, but was obliged to leave home immediately, and get his living as a herd's boy. Amid much hardship, he grew up a large boned, muscular, and somewhat passionate young man. In other respects, he gave no signs of the great powers that lay slumbering within him. At seventeen or eighteen years of age, during a time of great religious excitement, "the day of grace dawned upon his spirit," to use his own words, and he became a member of the Christian church. With the help of some of his companions, it was then that he first learned to read the Welsh Bible. Under the friendly patronage of a tailor in the village, he began to make his first efforts at "exhortation ;" and soon he seems to have been inspired with the fixed purpose of entering the ministry.

Christmas Evans first settled as a pastor, in a place called Lley, in Carnarvonshire. It seems to have been a poor place, and yet it was about this time that he ventured upon matrimony, and espoused a good sensible wife, in the person of one Catharine Jones. Rev. D. M. Evans gives us a graphic picture of him and his scanty literature, consisting of his Bible, his borrowed Welsh and English dictionary, and Burkitt on the New Testament, which

it is said he would often study in bed, with the said dictionary at hand, to look up all the hard words he encountered. Here it was, that his preaching took shape.

Up to this time, he seems to have been struggling to get his ideas and oratory into the form that should be most satisfying to his aspirations, and had not succeeded. But now God had sent him a teacher. One Robert Roberts, a Calvinistic Methodist preacher, of Carnarvonshire, a deformed, weakly-looking man, but an inspired preacher, did for Christmas Evans, that which Socrates prided himself in doing for the ideas of others—helping them to the birth. Christmas Evans, when asked if he could give an account of what led him into his peculiar way of preaching, replied: “Yes, I can, partly at least; I had the ideas before, but somehow couldn’t get at them. When I was in Lleyln, the Methodists had a man of the name of Robert Roberts, of Llanllyfui, who was very popular, and there was a great deal of talk about him. Well, I went on one Sunday afternoon to hear him. He was one of the most insignificant persons I ever saw—a little hunch-backed man; but he neither thought nor said any thing like other people; there was something wonderful and uncommon about him. This Robert Roberts gave me the key.”

At the end of two years we find him leaving Lleyln, and settling in Anglesea as a sort of evangelist to ten preaching stations, at a salary of seventeen pounds a year. Not pausing to ask how this great-boned man, six feet high, and his wife, could manage to live upon seven shillings a week, we go on to say, that it was here he spent the greater part of his life as a minister—that is not less than thirty-four years. This was the period of his great glory as a preacher. It was now that he began to make those frequent preaching tours into South Wales, which were made ever-memorable by his wonderful sermons at the great associations. Mr. Evans has given so graphic a picture of his great namesake preaching at one of these gatherings, that, though it has been quoted before, we can not help extracting it:—“Meanwhile, in the midst of a too general hum and restlessness, the preacher had read for his text: ‘And you that were some time alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked words, yet now hath He reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to pre-

sent you holy and unblamable, and unrepachable in his sight.' His first movements were stiff, awkward and wrestling, while his observations were, perhaps, crude and common-place, rather than striking or novel ; but he had not proceeded far, before, having thus prepared himself, he took one of his wildest flights, bursting forth at the same time into those unmelodious, but all-piercing shrieks, under which his hearers often confessed his resistless power. Closer and closer draw in the scattered groups, the weary loungers, and the hitherto listless among the motley multitude. The crowd becomes dense with eager listeners as they press on insensibly toward the preacher. He gradually gets into the thickening plot of his homely but dramatic representation, while, all forgetful of the spot on which they stood, old men and women, accustomed to prosy thoughts and ways, look up with open mouth, through smiles and tears. Big, burly country folk, in whom it might have been thought that the faculty of imagination had long since been extinguished, became engrossed with ideal scenes. Men 'whose talk is of bullocks,' are allured into converse with the most spiritual realities. The preachers present, become dazzled with the brilliance of this new star on the horizon ; they start on their feet round the strange young man, look hard at him in perfect amazement ; loud and rapturous confirmations break forth from their lips ; 'Amen,' 'Ben digedig,' 'Diolch byth,' fall tumultuously on the ear ; the charm swells onwards from the platform to the extreme margin of the wondering crowd, and to the occasional loud laugh, there has now succeeded the baptism of tears. The excitement is at its highest ; the preacher concludes, but the weeping and rejoicing continue until worn out nature brings the scene to an end."

A brief summary of his chief qualities as a preacher must include passion, or ardent excited feeling, a dramatic imagination, and grotesque humor. The published scraps of sermons which remain, and have been translated into English, illustrate these qualities, and almost only these. He does not reason, he does not argue, he does not think, he does not betray anywhere any capacity for speculation. The light he casts upon religious truth is not of the intellectual sort ; it is the light that flames out from the heart—the light of the imagination, which enabled him to see

truth in its concrete forms, and to dramatize abstract principles. He imparted no novelty to the forms of religious thought, but he could light up as with a flash of lightening the whole horizon of acknowledged fact and doctrine. And in this he proved himself to be the great preacher, and not the great theologian or essayist.

Perhaps our readers would like to see our great preacher in his study, "preparing his sermon." "Two young ministers one day called at his cottage, and after Catherine had admitted them with a very few quiet words, there is sitting at a little round table set out for tea, an evidently abstracted man, withdrawn from every object around him, Bible in hand, and in agonizing thought. He takes no more notice of the strangers than if they had been familiar pieces of household furniture. He moves to and fro in his chair, performing the "pumping" process, of which John Foster has told us, but with little result; still he *can not* abandon the endeavor. He closes and opens his eyes, but upon other scenes, and his face looks dark and clouded. His first cup has been drank long ago, and his wife nudges him, and asks him to forward the cup to be replenished; all unconscious of her meaning, he hands her the little Bible which he holds in his hand. Still the vision does not brighten. He becomes restless, gets up from his seat, and turns over page after page of Dr. Owen's volumes; tries another Puritan divine, and another, but in vain. What can he do? The result does not come, still he can not let go the process. One resource remains—he, there and then, undistracted by earthly presence, bends his knee in fervent prayer, and pours forth the most ardent supplications to Him who can 'open the eyes of the understanding.' Again he resumes his work, and his face grows calmer and brighter, his expression of agony wears away, and in a short time he has succeeded. He now emerges from the struggle, cordially addresses his visitors, and becomes playful and genial as a child."

One of the most interesting chapters in Mr. Evans' book to an Englishman and a preacher, is that in which he explains and accounts for the popularity of the Welsh pulpit. We will sum up the causes in a few words. When the great preacher of a past day (for Welsh oratory now is losing its national character) stood in the pulpit, he was sole monarch of the interest of his congrega-

tion ; that interest was not distracted or divided, either by literature, politics, or science. "The sermon became almost the sole means of intellectual, moral, and even recreational excitement." In England, at least now, novels, reviews, commerce, politics, and popular science, all have, more or less, a place in the thoughts of those whom the preacher has to interest, and divide the empire of the people's mind, making the work of the preacher an infinitely more difficult task. Then there was the hearty, unrestrained *responses of the congregation*, helping to kindle the fire of the preacher, and replenishing it with fresh fuel as he proceeded, till it attained its greatest heat and splendor ; and the *preacher's training* did not carry him beyond the perfect sympathies of his hearers. His training was pre-eminently in the one book—the Bible—and here he and his people met on common ground. They studied the Bible, and the Bible alone, and only in the light of the Puritan theology. This perfect sympathy was the more firmly established by the adoption of an almost exclusively scriptural phraseology in the sermon, which gave the highest advantage with an audience whose whole literature was the Bible. In addition to this, it is to be admitted, notwithstanding all the extravagant claims that have been made for the Welsh language, that it is a language admirably adapted to the wants of the orator, "not easily surpassed for bold, vigorous, and resounding expressions." And then the language is not grammatically taught or spoken by any class of the people, so that a preacher using the broad provincialisms of the people, would speak home to the mass without offending the tastes of any class in his congregation. This could not be done in England. Robert Hall and Billy Dawson could not have preached with success to the same congregation. We shall try to make the reader understand what is meant by the Welsh *hwyl*, and the part it plays in the Welsh preaching, by quoting a sentence or two from Mr. Evans' account of it :—"The *hwyl* actually sang. It was distinguished from the natural melody of all truly eloquent speaking in which the emotions are deeply excited, by the fact that the cadences were so varied and prolonged, that at last the preacher addressed himself, as in mere music, to the imagination, through the medium of sound. The afflatus common to all great excitement passed into recitative and

song. The *hwyl* (full sail) would not possibly explain nor argue ; it came on at the height of the excitement, to work in the impressions of truth that had been stated, argued and illustrated, and its effect was overwhelming. * * * * * When, rising higher and higher in excitement, the preacher had reached the height of ordinary inspiration, he would break forth in wild, irregular chant of jubilant tones or wailing cadences." The *hwyl* cannot be imported, if it were desirable ; and if it could, the entire body of circumstances necessary to its success, cannot be transferred. But we feel perfectly assured that the voice has played a far more important part in the history of the Welsh pulpit than in that of any other, and that the *hwyl*, with its peculiar form of inspiration, *has been one of the main elements in the universal popularity of Welsh preaching.*

Christmas Evans, and his great cotemporaries, John Elias and Williams of Wern, have passed away, and with them has passed away also the grandeur of Welsh preaching. Let it be admitted that the spirit and method of their preaching were adapted to a period of great spiritual outburst and renewal of the national life. We will call it revival preaching, little fitted to instruct, and educate and edify, but almost exclusively adapted to rouse men just awaking from a long spiritual slumber. Now, even in Wales, the people are more educated, and are accustomed to and require a more thoughtful style of preaching ; and, no doubt, if Christmas Evans awoke from the dead, and had to preach to this generation, he would preach so as to meet the new circumstances in which his countrymen were placed. But we must believe that he would retain his accustomed fire ; if he argued more, he would argue in burning syllogisms ; if he encountered prevailing errors and prejudices, he would launch thunderbolts at them, or flash upon them the killing light of truth. He would never give in to the doctrine, that to be intelligent you must be tame ; that to instruct, you must be cold, and that fire and passion and fancy, must all be abandoned to untrained, headlong fanatics.

We confess to a purpose to get a moral out of this great Welshman, for the preaching of the present day. We should like his life by Mr. Evans, together with that by Rev. D. R. Stephen, (a memoir with many characteristic beauties) to lie upon the study

table of every minister in the three kingdoms. They would be especially valuable if they only inspired every minister with *the determination to succeed* in his preaching. We see in this man how he cast about for a long time trying to catch the right method, till at last he got the "key," and how persistently he wrestled with God for his sermons. To produce a sermon, was with him an agony—a conflict not only of the intellect, but of the heart and of the imagination. It was not merely the getting of a "division," and the skillful mapping out of a subject, with its first, second, and third heads, but he strove well and long to get at the flaming heart of the subject in hand, and to kindle his whole soul with it, before he was satisfied to appear before the congregation. The success we here plead for is of only the preliminary kind—not the higher success of converting men and building them up, for the latter cannot be attained without the former. The first, the indispensable thing for the minister of the gospel, is to be able to compel the attention of his hearers—to win for his sermon a thorough interest in the minds of his audience; and if Christmas Evans, with a simple, and for the most part, rustic audience, had to work hard to succeed in this, much more must the preacher *now* work hard to captivate the mind of a congregation preoccupied with the thousand questions and interests of modern civilization. The great body of the people still believe in the Bible; we have few unbelieving philosophers to encounter; but we have an almost infinite amount of unbelief which takes the shape of profound apathy—an intense absorption in material and present things, or a vague, half-formed conviction, that some important religious questions can not be certainly and satisfactorily solved and answered, and that much of the dogmatic teaching of the pulpit, may only be partly true. How much of all this may be due to the pulpit itself, we do not presume to say; but we do say, that if it is to be overcome and cast out, the preacher must first know that it exists, and then how to dislodge it.

We say, then, that there must be what we will call the *preaching temperament*; the power of not only seeing but of feeling with intense excitement, the truth which the preacher seeks to urge on his audience. This was one great part of Christmas Evans' power. From this came the *hwy!* Cold plegmatic men, who are

not able to tremble themselves at the message they have to deliver, will never be able to make others tremble. We know very well that the *vis vivida* does not depend on a man's will, but we say that where it is absent it is a great disqualification of the Christian preacher. Then this vital quality of the preacher's mind must be heated and inflamed by prolonged study of the sermon, and by grappling with the truth to be preached, with the intellect, the conscience, the passions, and the imagination. Didactic teaching and exhortation, are of infinitely less consequence than the being able to stimulate men to think and to feel. This is what the great preachers have done ; with impetuous force they have broken in upon the ordinary currents of men's thinking and feeling, and compelled them, for the time at least, to gaze with transports of wonder and joy, upon glorious pictures of the unseen and impalpable. Preachers who would do this again, must be men not only of blameless lives, but mighty in their wrestlings with God and with truth—who make the study an oratory, and who carry from the study to the pulpit, sermons that have been inspired at God's altar.—*Theological Eclectic*.

PREACH CHRIST AND HIM CRUCIFIED.

1. Ministers should unflinchingly and constantly exhibit the cross, because *Christ and him crucified afford the truest and brightest exhibition of the character of God on which men can gaze.*

One important branch of the minister's duty is to make God known. Zion is exhorted to lift up her voice with strength, to have no fear, and to say unto the cities of Judah, "Behold your God." Paul recognized this as his mission to the men at Athens. He said to them, "Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious, for as I passed by and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription—To the *Unknown God*. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you." Acts xvii. 22, 23. Men know not God ; and therefore if

ministers are to meet men's wants, they must be able to point them to some true exhibition of his character.

We have said that men know not God. They have wandered into gross darkness in reference to his character. Prompted by their innate desire to worship, they have made to themselves lords many and Gods many, whose characters are just the embodiments of their own evil passions ; by worshipping which, depraved man has rushed into a darker and deeper depravity. As fallen, men do not know God so as to love him, and honor and serve him. * * * Then must not the minister, as he wishes men to know and be happy in God, preach Christ crucified? For the illumination of the human spirit, in regard to God, one ray from the cross is worth more than all the light which can be brought from any other quarter whatever.

2. *Christ and Him crucified, known and believed in, bring the soul into a state of reconciliation with God.*

Man, as fallen, is estranged from God. Men are alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them. They do not enjoy his friendship. His sweet and gracious smile does not gladden their hearts. They rather regard him as their enemy. They find fault with him as if he had done them some injury. But here they are wrong. God is not *their* enemy ; they are *his* enemies : for "*the carnal mind is enmity against God.*" God always loved them, loves them still, rebellious though they are. How otherwise can we explain the gift Christ Jesus? Not that God is pleased with their sins. This cannot be : for God is purity itself. He loves their souls, has no pleasure in their death, and yearns for their return to his favor and smile : and this is the reconciliation of man to God.

This is another end the minister must seek to accomplish by his preaching. It is the great end he must seek as regards the unsaved. Paul says,—that he and his fellow laborers were ambassadors of Christ for this very purpose,—that in Christ's stead, they besought men "be ye reconciled to God." "The preaching of the cross" is the method of accomplishing this end as far as the preacher is concerned. For he exhibits the ground of reconciliation thus : "For he hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."

2 Cor. v. 21. He speaks also of "being reconciled to God by the death of his Son."

How does the knowledge of "Christ and Him crucified" bring the soul into a state of reconciliation with God?—That the soul be reconciled to God it must be brought to know him. Ignorance of God keeps man at a distance from him. Now the cross unfolds the everlasting love of God to man, and gives him true conceptions of his character. But there is more than this in the cross of Jesus. Sin has separated between the soul and God; and God's holiness as a frowning barrier prevents the sinner's approach to God's heart, unless there be some way whereby it may be forgiven, or some revelation of God, as propitious. Man has wandered from God: and his wanderings have not been guiltless. He has turned into his own way; and incurred the righteous displeasure of God by his sins. He is under wrath. Just as without a propitiation for sin, man's return to God's bosom must be everlastingly forbidden, so we cannot explain the mysterious agonies of Jesus in the garden and his woful sufferings on the cross otherwise than by regarding them as propitiatory. Ah! the nails pierced his hands and his feet, but more bitter nails held him to the tree. Our sins nailed him there. And it is in his submitting to suffer the Just for the unjust that he might bring us to God, that the love of God is seen.

Here then we have the ground of reconciliation. We departed from God. This did not change his love toward us into hatred. He loves us still: and that there might be a way back to his favor, he most generously gave his own Son to die for us.

There is no other ground of reconciliation. There is salvation in no other than Jesus. "There is no other name given under heaven among men whereby we must be saved." Man cannot expiate his own guilt. His repentance, however sincere, will not do for an expiation. O then must not the minister, to be successful, preach Christ and him crucified?

3. *Christ and him crucified known and believed in are the grand means of purity.*

The minister of Christ sustains a relation to the world. He should exhibit God's love in Christ to men, as the ground on which they are to be forgiven and accepted by God. But he also

sustains an important relation to the children of God. He should feed them with wholesome food ; for, according to the spiritual strength and piety of the saints for whom and with whom he labors, has his preaching weight on the world.

Now it is at this point that many, even among Christians, suppose that there should be a departure from the cross. They regard it as *the* thing for the unsaved ; but they imagine that the saint cannot be built up on his most holy faith, cannot increase in piety, unless he occupy his mind with other and higher truths. I grant that there are many truths in the Bible fitted to edify the Christian. There are promises to comfort him ; precepts pointing out to him the path of duty, threatening to deter him from going out of the king's highway into any by path disclosures, of the glory yet to be revealed, to animate him to holier deeds. But whence do all these derive their power ? From the cross. How are they most beautifully seen ? By the light of the cross. And moreover the Cross itself is the grand instrument of sanctification. It is the power of God unto sanctification. Hence Jesus prays "Sanctify them through thy truth, thy word is truth." He says to his disciples, "Now are ye clean through the word which I have spoken unto you." Hence Paul beseeches the Corinthians not to depart from the simplicity that is in Christ. Just as Satan got man away from God in the garden of Eden, so is it still his object to get men away from the cross. But the gospel is not a worn out instrument. It is not an obsolete thing. It is as sharp as ever, to cut the ligaments of evil habits which bind sin to the soul. While the cross of Christ is so simple that the wayfaring man can understand it, it has heights and depths, where the intellects of angels may for ever soar and dive ; lengths and breadths to traverse which, though they wing their way with telegraphic swiftness, they will acquire eternity. Reader, if you are crying out for something else than the Gospel, it is an indication that your soul is in an unhealthy state. Rather catch the spirit of cherubim and seraphim, and gaze with wonder on the mysteries of redeeming love. The cross purifies the soul ; as it unfolds not only the love, but also the purity of God. We have already spoken of the love of God as seen in the cross. His purity is seen in the bitter agonies and death of Jesus. Our sins

were imputed to Jesus. He bore them. And surely had it been possible for God to have lowered the requirements of law and justice that he as the righteous Ruler of the universe might be propitiated, he would have done so when his well-beloved Son was the victim. But no : even Jesus must pay to the uttermost farthing. No one can contemplate God's love and purity as thus seen in the cross—love freely giving, and holiness exacting ; and both embracing each other : love gratified and holiness satisfied—without experiencing the most powerful sanctifying influences.

Then the minister must exhibit the cross even to the people of God.

4. *Christ and him crucified are the best means of consolation to the believer.*

Now the cross of Christ is abundantly fitted to console the believer. O what rich streams of consolation flow from the cross ! Is the Christian enduring bodily affliction ? How is he comforted when he thinks that Jesus, without repining, endured sufferings unutterably dreadful, and endured them, when he deserved them not, for man. O in the light of the cross, he sees clearly that he deserves sufferings far more dreadful than he is enduring, and that they must have fallen, with all their accumulated force upon him, had it not been for the agonies of the cross. Has the spirit of the Christian been ruffled and chafed by the coldness and selfishness of a harsh and unfeeling world ? O what so well fitted to hush the tumults of passion, to lay the soul in humble confidence at God's feet, as a view of Him, who, when he was reviled, reviled not again ; when he suffered, threatened not, but committed himself unto him that judgeth righteously. Is the soul assaulted with most powerful temptations ? Does the Christian come to the house of God on the Sabbath, his soul in perfect agitation, through the raging of evil desires which he wishes not to gratify, and yet knows not how to get rid of ? What is so adapted to calm and subdue him, and to deliver him from the power of temptation, as a sight of Jesus, overcoming all his spiritual foes, even in his death triumphing over principalities and powers ! Thus we see that the cross is admirably fitted to console. Christian, love the cross more than ever ! Sit beneath its hallowing shade. Strive to get as close to it as possible.—*Canadian Day-Star.*

SANCTIFICATION IN DETAIL.

It were only necessary to open the Epistles of Paul, we should suppose, to see that he moved into a range of topics and duties which find no place in the concern of many modern preachers—discontent, envy, anger, jealousy, ambition, gentleness, purity, modesty, decency, candor, industry,—a catalogue that cannot be recited. We see at once that he does not regard the religious character in his converts as a thing by itself, a conversion well tested and followed by a few duties specially religious. He considered the whole character of the disciple—mind, manners, habits, principles—as the Lord's property. He felt that the gospel was intended and fitted to act on everything evil and ungraceful in man's character, and applied it to that purpose. And thus he sought to present his disciples perfect and complete in all the will of God, a much more difficult and laborious way of preaching than the one to which indolence, we fear, now adds prevalence. Let the minister of truth, then, occupy such intervals as are suitable in forming the character of his people to things lovely and of good report. Let him take advantage of Scripture history, and especially of the history of Christ's life and manners, to draw out illustrations of character, and beget what is so much needed by the Christian body, a *sense of character*—of moral beauty and completeness. Let him not use the parables of the talents always to enforce the duty of usefulness. Sometimes, at least, let mention be made of doubling the talents, making ten twenty, the five ten. Let him follow the people into their business, into their civil duties, and especially into their domestic relations, showing the manner which children may be trained up as Christians in the nurture of the Lord, seeking to surround the Christian homes with Christian graces, teaching how to make them pleasant to the youth, and at the same time spiritually healthful. And let him do all this in the manner of Paul or Oberlin, as a work of the Spirit, a work into which the Holy Spirit leads him as truly as into any other. The tendrils of the vines are small things, but yet they support the grapes. In like manner this disposition to adorn the doctrine of Christ by a nice obedience and a faithful copying of the Saviour, is that which knits the Christian, tendril-like, to God's support.—*Bushnell*.

DEATH CONTEMPLATED.

"What man is he that liveth and shall not see death?"—PSALM LXXXIX. 48.

These words have the force of an affirmation, that there is no man who liveth that shall not see death.

In the history of humanity, two cases only are upon record, in which a man lived and did not see death.

These were Enoch and Elijah.

But in these cases their earthly career was not protracted, but was ended by their removal without death.

With these two miraculous exceptions, all have died, and all that now live must die.

We who are here to-day must soon die.

It is then proper for us to pause amid life's activities, and contemplate its close and ask ourselves,

WHAT IS DEATH?

A brief answer to this question, is all that will be attempted in this discourse.

1. Death is one of the consequences of the fall, that is of the sin of Adam.

"In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." Gen. ii. 17.

The margin reads, "Dying thou shalt die."

"Wherefore as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death is passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." Rom. v. 12.

"For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." 1 Cor. xv. 21, 22.

2. Death is a separation between the soul and body, not the extinction of the rational soul.

Of human life it is said, "It is soon cut off and we fly away." Psalm xc. 10.

"For we know that if this earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands eternal in the heavens." 2 Cor. v. 1.

The body is here called an earthly house, a tabernacle.

"For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ which is far better ; nevertheless, to abide in the flesh is more needful for you." Phil. i. 23, 24.

The appearance of Moses and Elijah, on the mount of transfiguration, is a clear proof that the soul lives after the body is dead.

3. Death, to those who improve life, is a release from toil, trouble, and suffering, and an entry upon a state of endless happiness.

I do not say that they will enjoy all the happiness and glory that they will after the resurrection, but they will be happy.

They will be free from all the ills of this life.

No more will the weary trembling frame toil on in its exhausting efforts.

No more will the eye swim with the tear of sorrow.

No more will pain distort and waste and kill the outward man.

No more will the head throb and ache with labored anxious thoughts.

No more will the heart feel sick and faint at the sight or thought of human wrongs and human ills.

"Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth ; yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors ; and their works do follow them." Rev. xiv. 13.

"Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." Rev. ii. 10.

"There the wicked cease from troubling, and there the weary are at rest." Job iii. 7.

Farewell to earth, to all thy toils, dangers, sufferings, and hateful and painful sights.

Hail ! land of the blessed ; I come ; soul of Abel, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Elijah, Isaiah, John, Peter and Paul ; I come to join your circle, and to take part in the song which ye have so long sung amid the glories of the spirit land.

Angels too, I greet you, with your bright wings, so swift to do the will of God.

4. Death, to those who misimprove this life, is a fearful termination of all their earthly pleasures and hopes, and an entry upon a state of unhappiness.

"The wicked is driven away in his wickedness, but the righteous hath hope in his death." Prov. xiv. 32.

Driven away from all his earthly interests and joys.

Farewell to earth with all its pleasant scenes and flowers and fountains.

Farewell to wealth in all its forms.

Farewell to friends, which, with many constitute earth's strongest ties.

Driven away *in* his wickedness, not *from* it.

He carries his sin and guilt with him, and consequently his misery.

He is *driven* away, he does not go willingly.

He is driven *away*, but to what place is he driven.

Driven to the land of unblessed ghosts like himself; where the rich man went, when in hell he lifted up his eyes in torment.

Where no anticipated change promises to bring improvement.

Where the long dark night of despair will never be illumed by one ray of hope.

Driven away into an undone eternity.

5. Death is uncertain, in regard to the time of its coming.

We know that we must die, but we know not the time, the day nor the hour.

Death selects his victims from every class, from the infant of an hour to those who are gray and deaf and blind with age.

6. Death is near to every one of us.

A few years only will pass before all that now live will be dead.

When Xerxes looked upon his five million army, with which he invaded Greece, he wept at the thought, that in one hundred years not one of that vast army would be alive.

It will not take a hundred years for death to do his work in our case.

He is already upon the threshold of our doors.

REMARKS.

1. This subject should check our devotion to this world.

The world is not worth so much as many fancy it to be, even while we live to enjoy it.

But we can enjoy the world only for a short time.

Worldly interests are only as a dream which vanishes at early dawn.

The world is worth nothing to a dying man.

2. It is very unsafe to live as we dare not die.

Should death overtake us now, just where we are, what would be the result to us?

Would we feel safe to die here now, as we are?

Suppose we were shown a shroud, and a coffin, and an open grave, and told that they were for us, what would be our feelings?

Would death be to us a messenger of peace or of terror?

That shroud and coffin will soon be prepared for us.

The materials for our shroud and coffin may already be prepared.

Here lies one before you, already in his shroud and coffin, who, not long since, had as fair a promise of long life as you, but we are called upon to lay him in the grave. "Be ye ready also."

THE WAY, THE TRUTH, AND THE LIFE.

"Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth and the life : no man cometh unto the Father but by me."—JOHN XIV. 6.

Admittance to heaven is meant by coming unto the Father.

Christ was speaking of going away, and of the place to which he was going, and of the way to that place.

That place was heaven, of which he said, "Whither I go, ye know, and the way ye know." Verse 4.

Thomas replied, "We know not whither thou goest, and how can we know the way?" Verse 5.

Jesus answered in the words of the text, "I am the way, the truth, and the life."

The sense clearly is, "I am the way to the Father in heaven, the truth which makes this way plain, and the life of power and joy which enables men to walk in it here, and enjoy its fruition forever.

In a word, Christ is the author of entire salvation, presented in the threefold light of a way, truth, and life.

My theme is,

Christ's presentation of himself, as the only medium of salvation.

I. CHRIST IS THE WAY TO GOD ; TO HOLINESS, HAPPINESS AND HEAVEN.

A way is the place, or line of passage from one locality to another.

Morally, way denotes the means of passing from one condition or state to another. •

Sin is the way from God to ruin.

"Your sins have separated between you and your God." Isa. lix. 2.

Christ is the way to God, through whom we must come, if we come at all.

1. Christ is the way by his atonement and intercession.

Without the atonement there could be no pardon.

Without his intercession there could be no access to the Father.

2. Christ is the way by his precepts.

Way sometimes denotes the manner of life.

The precepts of the gospel describe the manner in which we must live to get to heaven.

Christ has taught us how to live.

3. Christ is the way by his example.

Christ lived a pattern life.

He illustrated every precept by a living example.

II. CHRIST IS THE TRUTH.

The light by which we walk in him, our way.

The truth is light, and Christ is that truth.

1. Christ is the fountain and source of all religious truth.

Truth proceeds from him, as light from the sun ; truth is his, and he is truth.

He is declared to be the true light.

The gospel is the embodiment of all religious truth, and it is the gospel of Christ.

When we preach the true gospel, we preach not ourselves nor our own, but Christ and what is his ; but he preached what was his own.

We preach the gospel in his name, but he preached it in his own name.

2. Christ is the truth in the sense of substance, as opposed to symbols, types and shadows.

The religion of the Jews consisted of symbols, types and shadows.

Christ is the substance of them all.

Jewish types were not gospel truth, any more than a map is the country.

A shadow is not the light, nor is it the body, the substance, that causes the shadow by obstructing the light.

When a body obstructs the light, a shadow image of that body is thrown upon the wall or canvas ; so Jewish shadows exhibited the yet unrevealed Saviour who is the truth and substance.

III. CHRIST IS THE LIFE, LIFE ITSELF, AND SOURCE OF LIFE TO ALL THAT LIVE.

"In him was life, and the life was the light of men." John i. 4.

"As the Father hath life in himself, even so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself." John v. 26.

1. Christ is our spiritual life.

The life of godliness which the Christian lives in this world is derived from Christ.

"I am the vine, ye are the branches." John xv. 5.

2. Christ is the life and power of the resurrection, by which our bodies will be raised from the dead, and live forever.

"All that are in their graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth." John v. 29.

"He must reign until he hath put all enemies under his feet ; the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." 1 Cor. xv. 25, 26.

"I am the resurrection and the life, he that believeth in me though he were dead, yet shall he live ; and he that liveth and believeth on me shall never die."

3. Christ is the life in the sense of activity, vigor and animation.

He is the life of our strength and moral power—"Without me ye can do nothing."

He is the life of our zeal, the living fire that burns within, and the power that moves us.

He is the life of our joy, the well-spring of happiness within. He said "the water that I shall give, shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life."

He is the life of heaven itself, without whose presence harps would drop from the hands of angels and saints, and songs would cease.

REMARKS.

1. Christ, as the way, the truth, and the life, is available to all. No sinner need fail to reach heaven for want of a way through which to reach that happy place.

Christ is the way.

No sinner need miss the way for want of light to see it, and to walk therein.

Christ is the light of truth.

No sinner need die eternally for want of everlasting life.

Christ is the life.

"This is the record that God hath given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son." 1 John v. 11.

2. Christ as "the way, the truth and the life," is available only by faith. "He that believeth not the Son shall not see life." John iii. 36.

Saving faith is productive of all good works.

It cannot exist only in union with an honest purpose to do right in all things.

3. The importance of embracing Christ by faith, is too clear, in the light of the subject, to be overlooked.

Without him as our way, there can be nothing but wandering.

The whole of life is but the wandering of lost ones without Christ our way.

Without Christ, eternity will not rise upon us to end our wandering, as breaks on the traveler faint and astray, the bright and the balmy effulgence of morn; but will roll upon us as the blackness of darkness, in which we shall become wandering stars forever.

Without Christ as our life, there can be nothing but death.

"'Tis not the whole of life to live,
Nor all of death to die."

"There is a death whose pang
Outlives the fleeting breath;
Oh what eternal horrors hang
Around the second death."

Let me then appeal to you to come to Christ, "the way, the truth and the life."

You have wandered out of the way long enough.

You have lived without the truth, and dwelt in darkness long enough.

You have lingered in the valley and shadow of death long enough.

MOTIVES TO LABOR.

"Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him, let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins."—JAMES V. 19, 20.

The design of the apostle in this text appears to be, to present a sufficient motive to induce efforts to reform and save sinners.

He commences with an erring brother; "If any of you do err."

He draws his argument from a general principle; "He that converteth a sinner from the error of his way."

This means any sinner.

I. The text reveals the startling truth that sinners must be converted from the error of their ways or die.

This is the death of the soul to which sinners are exposed.

1. James distinguished between the body and the soul.

"As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also."

2. It is a death from which we may save men by converting them.

This is not true of common death.

It is then the punishment of sin which is here called death.

Life and death are the issue which is here presented to view, from which to draw our motive of action.

Eternal life and eternal death.

II. The text reveals the important fact, that we may be instruments of converting sinners, and of saving them from this terrible death.

We have not the power to save, in and of ourselves, but as God's instrumentalities we can save sinners.

God will work by us, if we work for him.

How then are we to secure this great object?

1. We must get our own hearts right.

We must have communion with God.

We must have the influence of his Spirit.

We must have access and power in prayer.

2. We must maintain consistent devoted christian lives before the world.

Without this we have no power.

Without this God will not use us.

3. We must put forth zealous earnest exertions to convert sinners.

Prayers in secret, deep groanings of soul.

Personal appeals, earnest entreaties with sinners.

Persevering efforts.

III. The text presents a motive to christian effort which ought to move every christian.

1. "He that converts one sinner shall save a soul from death."

What a powerful motive is this.

Eternal death is the fearful evil.

It stands opposed to eternal life.

Could you save a man from common death, how would you exert yourself?

2 "He that converteth a sinner from the error of his ways, shall hide a multitude of sins."

The converted person's sins will be hid by being pardoned, blotted out.

"Blessed are they whose sins are covered." Rom. iv. 7.

The sins of every sinner are a multitude.

A multitude of sins will be hid in the sense of prevented.

Sin will cease to be seen.

Its example will be removed.

How wide-spread and lasting the influence will be, we cannot now understand.

REMARKS.

1. Here is an enterprize open before you, worthy of your highest ambition, and best exertions.

Who will enter this field of labor ?

It is open to all, and all may do something in this great work.

Could angels do what you can do, they would come flying from above.

2. The subject makes an appeal to sinners.

It is for sinners this work is done.

How important that you be converted from the error of your ways.

THE GROUND OF CONDEMNATION.

“ This is the condemnation, that light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.”—JOHN III. 19.

In the 16th and 17th verses, we have a statement of the benevolent design of God, in sending his Son into the world.

In the 18th verse we have a statement of the immediate result, namely, some were acquitted and others were condemned.—“ He that believeth on him is not condemned, but he that believeth not is condemned already.”

The reason of this condemnation is then stated in the text :—“ This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.”

What the text affirms is just as true to-day, as it was when the words fell from the Saviour's lips, and we shall do well to consider their import.

1. The text affirms a first great truth, namely, that light is come into the world.

The light of truth is come into the world.

Light is here used to denote the truth of the Gospel.

Christ is the light of the world, and through him gospel light has come into the world.

2. We have a second fact affirmed, of most wonderful and alarming character, namely : that upon the coming of light into the world, men loved darkness rather than light.

Darkness is here used to denote error or ignorance ; religious falsehood, which perverts, or ignorance which obscures the path of human duty.

3. The text asserts a third fact, in explanation of the second, namely, that the reason why men loved darkness rather than light, was, "their deeds were evil."

This reason for preferring darkness to light shall be made the theme of the present discourse, laying aside all other important points to attend to this one.

1. Men of evil deeds love the darkness of error, rather than the light of truth, because the error obscures, while truth exposes their past delinquencies.

It is by a comparison of our conduct with the precepts of the Gospel, that we see and feel the enormity of our sin.

Paul said, "I was alive without the law once, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died." Rom. vii. 9.

It is not pleasant to impenitent sinners to have the light held before their eyes, exposing all evil deeds.

Look through the clear glass of the Gospel along the whole course of life, from its opening responsibilities to the present hour, and array of deeds loom up in contravention of its holy precepts.

In such a view the light is painful.

2. Men of evil deeds love the darkness of error rather than the light of truth, because the error obscures and the truth reveals the path of present duty.

The light of truth presents to the mind of every sinner, repentance, faith, and obedience, as a present duty. Not to know our duty, to keep ourselves ignorant of it, is the only way to feel at ease, without doing it. Could we keep the light of truth blazing before the sinner's mind, it would drive him to repentance or madness ; but sinners fly from the light into darkness, and seek repose in their sins under the cloud of error, which is but a refuge of lies.

3. Men of evil deeds, love the darkness of error rather than the light of truth, because the error obscures, and the truth reveals their final destiny.

The truth refers us to heaven and hell as comprehending the final destiny of all men.

The truth also cuts off impenitent sinners from any well grounded hope of heaven.

Sinners, who love sin and are determined to persist in it, are unwilling to have their coming destiny held before their eyes in the light of truth.

To be at ease and enjoy the pleasures of the world, sinners must forget that they have soon to die, and must appear before the bar of God, to be judged according to the deeds done in the body.

They must overlook the fact, that the decision of the last day will send them away into everlasting punishment.

Because the truth reveals these things, sinners love the darkness of error rather than the light of truth ; because their deeds are evil, and because they are unwilling to reform.

REMARKS.

1. The deep depravity, perverseness, guilt, and certain ruin of persisting sinners, are entirely conspicuous in the light of this subject.

To love error rather than truth, is a fearful crime, but to love it for such a reason is an achievement in guilt, which cannot fall far below the depravity of devils.

The comparison, "darkness rather than light," shows that they know the difference, and hence their rejection of the light is willful, and exhibits the deepest, darkest depravity.

Such reject the only remedy for their condition, and must perish.

2. The subject furnishes a solution of the otherwise mysterious fact, that the reforming influence of truth has been resisted in all ages and countries.

It was so in the days of Enoch, and Noah, and the prophets.

It was so in the days of Christ and his apostles.

It was so in the times of Luther, Wesley and Whitefield.

It is so now in this age and land of needed reform.

The reason is, reforming truth comes in contact with the selfish interests of men of evil deeds.

If the chief priest, and scribes and Pharisees had been right, had they never departed from the right way, they would not have opposed Jesus Christ as they did.

Had the preaching of Christ promoted their selfish interests, all would have been well.

Had Christ proclaimed them the conservators of the truth, and given such expositions of Jewish history as rendered their line of ancestry radiant with truth, virtue and fidelity, quite back to Moses, they would at once have crowned him as their Messiah.

But when he exposed their errors and corruptions, they rejected him as the only means of escaping with any degree of reputation from the scathing truth he uttered.

They loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil.

The same principles operate now, men oppose the progress of reform because it exposes them.

Men oppose the discussion of great moral questions because they are on the wrong side, so as to be exposed by the light the discussion is likely to evolve.

We find an illustration in the course of every class of errorists.

The Sabbath breaker wishes everybody to believe that men are under no obligation to observe one day more than another.

He who never prays, would be glad to have all believe none need pray.

The selfish would have all believe and feel that benevolence is not a matter of moral obligation, or that it requires but very little to satisfy its demand.

The history of the temperance cause furnishes an illustration.

It was opposed by men whose deeds were evil; men who manufactured, vended and drank.

The Anti-Slavery movement furnishes another illustration.

Men opposed it because they were in some way connected with slavery, and the discussion was likely to expose their position or damage their selfish interests.

One was engaged in Southern trade, and must sell his principles, or he could not sell his goods.

Others were office-seekers, and needed Southern support to give them the place they desired.

Some belonged to a slaveholding church, and feared exposure and damage in that department.

All such loved pro-slavery darkness rather than anti-slavery light, because their deeds were evil.

3. The subject is suggestive of the only sufficient remedy for the evil it reveals.

That remedy is the light of truth ; truth faithfully preached and applied will effect the necessary reform.

If the truth will not reform men, it cannot be done.

If we cannot reform men with the whole truth, we cannot do it with a part of it.

To suppress a part of the truth, with a view of getting men to embrace the remainder, as a means of saving them is absurd.

Such a course is a yielding to the selfishness of the heart, and it robs the Gospel of its power to save.

It leaves the heart unsubdued.

God will have the heart, which he cannot have while it rebels against any part of Gospel truth, as such.

The only means of final success then is to hold up the lamp of God's truth, and let it shine out on all sides and in all directions.

THE PEARL OF GREAT PRICE.

"Again : The kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant-man seeking goodly pearls : Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, he went and sold all that he had, and bought it."

By the kingdom of heaven we are to understand christianity.

It is like a merchant-man seeking goodly pearls, because its interests constitute the pearl of great price, of great value amid all other pearls.

All men are pearl seekers.

Happiness is the pearl after which they seek, yet seek it in different ways and different objects.

Some seek the pearl of riches.

Some seek the pearl of honor.

Some seek the pearl of pleasure.

Religion is the pearl of great price, that is, of great value.

He who gives up all for this pearl, and gives his heart to God, is the merchant-man of the text.

THE GREAT VALUE OF THIS ONE PEARL IS MY THEME.

1. This pearl, unlike every other pearl, increases our own intrinsic moral worth.

It is the ornament of the heart.

Riches make men selfish.

Wisdom makes them vain.

Power makes them cruel.

Religion makes them good.

2. This pearl makes its possessor happy.

No other pearl can do this.

3. This pearl has appended to it every other pearl that can be a benefit to us.

"Seek ye first the kingdom of God and all these things shall be added unto you."

"Godliness is profitable," &c.

4. This pearl may certainly be secured ; it is for all.

If you seek other pearls you may fail.

Riches are not sure to those who seek them.

Honor is uncertain, and is often missed.

Happiness escapes the grasp of the pursuer.

5. This pearl is a safe investment.

Nothing can rob you of it.

Every other pearl must perish or be lost.

Some waste with the using.

Some are lost along the way.

Some that survive we must leave behind us.

What is all the world worth to a dying man ?

This pearl is worth more in the dying hour than ever before.

It will make dying easy.

We can take it with us.

It is immortal.
The thief cannot steal it.
Fire cannot consume it.
Floods cannot drown it.
Moth cannot eat it.
Rust cannot corrupt it.
Sickness cannot blight it.
Time cannot waste it.
Death cannot kill it.
Eternity cannot outlive it.

REMARKS.

1. Will you seek this pearl ?
Will you make the necessary sacrifice ?
Sell all that you have got.
Your sins, your false hopes.
A beggar, with his filthy rags, buys robes and wealth, and a throne and a crown.
2. Think what you will do without it when every other interest shall fail.
We must soon take a last look on earthly things.
We shall have soon gained our last dollar.
Our last dollar will soon drop from our hands when death loosens our hold upon all earthly interests.

THE CHRISTIAN WARFARE.

“War a good warfare.”—1 TIM. I. 18.

The Scriptures are remarkable for the figures and illustrations they borrow from the common and familiar things of life, to impress upon us spiritual things.

The language of the text is borrowed from the unhappy conflicts which too frequently occur between nations, and clans, called wars.

We are not to regard it as an indorsement of national wars,

war always has its existence in wrong, and is in itself a fearful calamity. If men have the right of self defense, those who assail them, rendering a defense necessary, must be wrong.

But war, well-known in its character and operations, is used to illustrate the Christian's life, which is a life of conflict.

There is a moral warfare which all must maintain, who would secure salvation. Hence we are exhorted to "fight the good fight of faith," to "war a good warfare."

Viewing the Christian's life as a warfare, it is properly illustrated by analogy.

I. A WARFARE SUPPOSES ENEMIES IN THE FIELD AGAINST US.

Our enemies, as Christians, are threefold.

1. Satan with all the powers of darkness are against us.

"Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat." Luke xxii. 31.

"The devil having put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son to betray him." John xiii 2.

"Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost?" Acts v. 3.

"We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." Eph. vi. 12.

"Be sober, be vigilant ; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." 1 Peter v. 8.

2 The world in its various forms is a powerful foe to the cause of God and human salvation. Its riches, honors, and pleasures, draw men into perdition.

Its smiles and frowns are equally fatal to many.

"The friendship of the world is enmity with God ; whosoever therefore will be the friend of the world is the enemy of God." James iv. 4.

"In the world ye shall have tribulation ; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." John xvi. 33.

3. Men find a powerful foe in the depravity of their own hearts ; in their own evil propensities.

"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, who can know it." Jer. xvii. 9.

"A deceived heart has turned him aside." Isa. xlv. 20.

"Let no man deceive himself." Eph. v. 6

"Every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lusts." James i. 14.

This foe within is like an enemy in the camp, that may open the gate to every other foe.

II. A WARFARE SUPPOSES ORGANIZATION AND COMBINATION OF WISDOM, STRENGTH, AND EFFORT.

Every man must stand against the foe for himself, do his own duty, and strike his own blows for victory, yet there is and must be organization and union of effort.

Every christian is a soldier.

Every church is a division of the grand army, with its officers and leaders.

Jesus Christ is the great Captain of salvation. Heb. ii. 9.

All cannot be leaders and captains, but all can fill some place in the army.

Union in feeling and effort is important.

When soldiers strike at each other, and the different divisions fire into each other's camps, they help the enemy.

III. A WARFARE SUPPOSES ACTUAL, EARNEST, WATCHFUL, AND PERSEVERING EFFORT.

Armies are not raised to be idle, to do nothing, to repose in tents of ease.

There is much to be done, foes are all around us, and we must march and fight as we go.

There is no discharge, and no rest this side of the river, where lies our home, our rest, our crown, on the other shore.

There is much praying to be done, much preaching and hearing, much labor in the various branches of christian zeal and benevolence.

Much watching and guarding against the enemy, the devil, the world, and our own hearts.

Much fighting, actual conflicts. Paul said : "I therefore so run, not as uncertainly ; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air." 1 Cor. ix. 26.

There must be an actual grapple with the foe in every form in

which he comes, whether it be as a roaring lion, or as an angel of light.

We are in the enemies' country and have to march through it, and must watch and guard on every side, and hold no parlies with the foe, and give him no quarters.

The fight must be maintained until the last foe is vanquished, until the victory is won.

"Be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee a crown of life." Rev. ii. 10.

Death is the summons that calls us away from the scenes of toil and strife, to rest, to a crown, to a throne, and to glory.

IV. A WARFARE SUPPOSES A PRINCIPLE INVOLVED, A RIGHT TO MAINTAIN, AN INTEREST TO SECURE.

Human and national wars are often waged from trifling considerations.

This warfare has great reasons to back it.

The principle is the right of God to rule, the supremacy of the eternal throne, and our obligation and right to maintain our allegiance to our Creator.

The interest to be secured, is the salvation of our souls, the beatitudes of heaven, the glory of the throne, an unfading crown, eternal life.

What remains to finish my discourse, is to enforce the words of the text.

"War a good warfare."

A good warfare, is a warfare waged upon right principles, with a view to right results, well maintained, pushed to complete triumph.

This is a warfare in a right, good, and glorious cause. It is heaven's own case, waged on behalf of our own humanity.

It is a warfare waged at heaven's own expense.

Heaven's richest treasures have been poured out.

The object is the redemption of captive sinners, to bring them back to God, holiness and heaven.

It enlists the powers of heaven as well as earth.

The embattled host is led on by Jesus the Captain of our salvation, who will conduct it to certain triumph on the part of all those who follow him.

Christians, war this good warfare.

Sinner, come, join the army of God's embattled host.

It is your only safe course, you must fall into the ranks, or, be overthrown and perish.

CHRIST THE SAVIOUR OF THE WORLD.

BY REV. R. DONKERSLEY.

"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given," &c.—ISA. IX. 6, 7.

PROEM. This Scripture is an ancient prediction of the nativity of Jesus, given 741 years prior to the actual occurrence of that memorable and blessed event; and yet given more in the language and style of an historian than in that of a prophet. After the lapse of more than seven hundred years this remarkable prophecy was literally fulfilled in Bethlehem of Judea.

This fine passage may furnish us with interesting, instructive and profitable thought upon the distinguished personage herein set forth. Perhaps we could not propose to ourselves a better order of discussion than that given in our text.

"*Unto us a child is born.*" Here, doubtless, the prophet had an eye to the "child" Jesus, whose birth was an exact fulfillment of many ancient prophecies. It had been foretold that he should be born of a virgin: "Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; behold a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." Isa. vii. 14. St. Matthew records the fulfillment of this prediction,—"*Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.*" Isa. xxiii. 3. It was also foretold that he should make his advent in lowly and humble circumstances—"But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah," &c. Micah v. 2. Fulfilled, Matt. ii. 1: "*Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem,*" &c.

Remarkable circumstances attended his birth. He was made

known by an angel to a few poor shepherds who were watching their flocks by night. Luke ii. 8-11. His birth was celebrated by an angelic song of praise. Luke ii. 13, 14.

But the most important consideration is—he *was born for us, for our salvation*. Not for angels; good angels needed not his mediation, and bad angels could have no part therein. Nor was he given merely for the Jewish nation, “for in him shall all families of the earth be blessed.” Gen. ii. 3.

“*Unto us a son is given.*” Our Saviour is the Son of God. But when we thus speak, we speak exclusively of his manhood. “I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me, thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee.” Ps. ii. 7.

“Given.” Jesus is God’s gift to our fallen race. “God so loved the world,” &c. John iii. 16. He is the greatest gift that an infinite God could confer upon man. “He that spared not his own Son,” &c. Rom. viii. 32. He was “given” to redeem the world. “And he is the propitiation,” &c. 1 John ii. 2. To save us from sin. “And thou shalt call his name Jesus,” &c. Matt. i. 21. To bring us to glory. “For it became him,” &c. Heb. ii. 10.

“*The Government shall be upon his shoulder.*” Not civil or political government. The Jews were looking for this: but herein they were disappointed. Christ himself declared his kingdom not to be of this world. John xviii. 36.

It was the spiritual government of the church, in all its vast and weighty concerns, was laid upon Christ. Christ is the Head of the Church. Eph. iv. 15, 16; Col. i. 18. Christ is fully competent for this vast undertaking, for he is infinite in wisdom, omnipresent in being, and omnipotent in power.

“*His name shall be called wonderful.*” Very properly is this name given to the distinguished personage before us, for he is a truly wonderful being. He is wonderful in his person, as “the child born,” the “son given,” and yet, “the mighty God, the everlasting Father.”

Truly, this union of the Divine and human natures in one and the same person is not only “wonderful,” but deeply mysterious and inexplicable.

Such unity of these two distinct natures in the person of Christ,

is a clearly expressed doctrine of Divine revelation. He who "thought it no robbery to be equal with God, took upon him the form of a servant," &c. Phil. ii. 6-11.

Christ had a nature that gave the law, and a nature that obeyed it. As God he was high as the Father; as man he was low as the child. Every attribute belonging to Deity is ascribed to him, and every property belonging to man—sin only excepted—belonged to him. As God he fed 5000 individuals with a few small loaves and fishes; as man he was hungry. As man he wept over the grave of Lazarus; as God he commanded him to come forth. As God he said to the repenting thief on the cross, "this day shalt thou be with me in paradise;" as man he exclaimed, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me." As God he said, "I and my Father are one;" as man he said, "My Father is greater than I."

Here, as with reference to the resurrection of the human body, we may exclaim, "Behold I show you a mystery." Mystery indeed! But not on that account to be rejected, or even called in question.

Nature is full of mysteries. But who, on that account, denies their existence or operations? How does vegetation come forth? By what laws are the operations of mind governed? How does one mind operate upon other minds? Explain if you can, the connection between the will to have it so and the movements of our feet, our hands, or any other part of our physical system.

This world is made up of atoms. What are atoms? Dr. Priestly informs us they are centres of attraction and repulsion. This definition translated out of Latin English into Saxon English, is, that atoms are centres of drawing to, and moving from; a definition it would puzzle Dr. Priestly himself to unriddle, and, at least as applicable to points of space as to atoms. They are defined to be solid extending somethings. What is the something thus solid and extended? Here our inquiries are stopped, and an atom is found to be a complete mystery.

The world is made up of atoms. What binds them together so as to constitute a world? "Attraction," it is answered. What is attraction? To this there is no answer. The world then on which we tread, in which we live, and about which we suppose

we have extensive knowledge, is wholly formed out of particles absolutely mysterious, bound together by a power equally mysterious.

He is wonderful in his love. Gal. i. 3, 4.

In his teachings. "Never man spake like this man." John vii. 46.

In his miracles. "And they were astonished with great astonishment." Luke v. 12.

In his saving power. Isa. lxiii. 1 ; Heb. vii. 25.

In his extending victories. Luke x. 17-19 ; Acts xi. 21.

"*Counsellor.*" A revealer of secrets. He revealed the gospel, with all its deep mysteries and transcendent blessings. 1 Tim. i. 10.

One who gives counsel. Jesus gave counsel to men in the days of his flesh. He now gives counsel by his Holy Spirit, by his written Word, and by his living ministry. His counsel is safe, and can be had on easy terms. James i. 5. If followed it will lead to glory. Ps. lxxiii. 24.

"*The Mighty God.*" Divine titles are given to Christ. He is distinctly called God. John i. 11. The great God. Titus ii. 3. The true God. 1 John v. 20.

Divine attributes are ascribed to Christ. Eternity of existence. John i. 1, 2. Omnipresence. Mark xviii. 20. Omniscience. John iv. 29. Omnipotence. Matt. xxviii. 18. Immutability. Heb. xiii. 8.

Divine works are ascribed to him. Creation. John i. 3. Preservation. Heb. i. 3. The resurrection of the dead. John v. 28, 29. The final Judge. Rom. xiv. 10.

Divine homage and worship are paid to him. By the angels at his birth. Heb. i. 6 ; by the first martyr. Acts vii. 59 ; by the heavenly host. Rev. v. 13.

"*The everlasting Father.*" This close in the Septuagint, is, "the Father of the age, or world to come," and in allusion to this, the gospel dispensation under the reign of the Messiah, is called the world to come. Heb. ii. 5.

Jesus is the Father of his people. As a father he loves them, protects them, and supplies their every need. He is the father of a new race—the head of a new family which shall never become extinct, for he is "the everlasting Father."

“*The Prince of Peace.*” Christ is a Prince. He is the Prince of the kings of the earth, for surpassing them in all that is great, excellent and glorious. Rev. i. 5. He is the “Prince of life,”—the author of life, of all life, temporal, spiritual, or eternal.

The Prince of Peace. He gives peace to all who believe in him. Isa. xii. 1 ; Rom. v. 1. He implants peaceable dispositions in the hearts of his subjects. His government promotes peace in the world. When the nations of the earth shall have received him as their rightful sovereign, they shall learn war no more. Isa. ii. 4.

PERORATION.

Admire and adore the Saviour of the world. Instead of vainly attempting to pry into the mysteries of his nature, bow to him the heart and knee, and give him the homage due to his nature and character.

Trust in him with unshaken confidence for pardon, peace, holiness and heaven.

Look to him in all difficulties, dangers, afflictions and temptations, for counsel, support and deliverance.

Commit to his keeping your bodies and souls, your family and friends, with all your temporal and spiritual interests, for time and for eternity.

THE FULLNESS OF CHRIST.

“For it pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell.”

In the Scriptures of truth, in the history of the church, in the triumphs of heaven, and in the estimation of every believer, “Christ is all.” All our hopes are in him, all our desires are toward him, and all our comforts are derived from him. Let us *contemplate the fullness of Christ.*

He has a fullness essential to him as God, and a fullness treasured up in him as mediator. In the contemplation of the fullness of Christ, we are, as it were, standing on the banks of a mighty

river, whose streams are incessantly rolling on, and, as we cannot count the particles of the watery element that passes before us, so we can form no adequate idea of these inestimable blessings that flow from Christ.

A fullness of wisdom for our instruction.—By nature the understanding is dark, the lamp of human reason, however carefully trimmed, will, at its greatest height, give but a faint and dim light; one beam of the Sun of Righteousness, darting into the soul will discover more to it than reason ever could do, and give “us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ.”

A fullness of merit for our redemption.—Enslaved as we are by sin and Satan, we need a redeemer. In the person of Christ we have one who is mighty to save. The sacrifice he presented was full and complete, answering every purpose it was designed to accomplish. It is all fullness that dwells in him. There are all spiritual blessings for all descriptions of sinners.

A fullness of power for our support.—There is might and mercy, glory and grace, power and piety combined in him. Our condition is one of helplessness and weakness, but Christ is our strength. In him there is power for our support, as well as grace for our salvation.

A fullness of grace for our final happiness.—He is full of grace and truth. Here is a Divine treasury that can never be exhausted. Millions have been supplied from this storehouse, yet there is no diminution, for still in him all fullness dwells. May the Almighty enable us, on the one hand, to see the emptiness of the world, and on the other, the fullness of Christ, and receive of his fullness, and grace for grace.—*Temple.*

MEDITATION.—As fire will not warm us unless we tarry at it, and as a bee cannot suck the honey from a flower unless she abide upon it; no more can any child of God receive support and consolation from the promises, unless he seriously and solemnly ponder and meditate on them.

BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION.

INTERPRETATION OF THE SCRIPTURES AS A TRANSLATION.

We suppose it known to all readers of the Scriptures, that they were not originally written in the English language. The Old Testament was written in Hebrew, and the New Testament in Greek, and the English Scriptures which we possess are translations from these languages. As the best translation can be no more than a human work, it may be imperfect and incorrect in some particulars, which has been regarded by many as throwing great difficulties in the way of a correct understanding of English Scriptures, especially by the unlearned. Before these difficulties some have refused to settle their minds in regard to important doctrines; they believe what the Scriptures really teach to be true but what they teach in particular they never allow themselves to decide. Scepticism has taken advantage of the supposed difficulties to strengthen itself in its position of doubt and unbelief. But while it is admitted that there are difficulties, it is insisted that they have been greatly magnified, and that they may be overcome, so far as to answer all practical ends. Honest inquirers may learn the truth, so far at least as to answer the end of their salvation.

In giving rules for the interpretation of the Scriptures as a translation, three classes of persons must be regarded.

The learned in the original languages form a class, who hold the key of knowledge in their own hand. They can read the original, and then read the English, and compare, and where there has been a difference of opinion, they can compare the several translations with each other, and with the original, and must be able to satisfy their own minds.

Suppose a Hebrew and Greek scholar wishes to satisfy himself in regard to the meaning of the word *hell*, as he finds it in the English Scriptures. He will turn to his Hebrew Bible, and find that it is translated from the Hebrew word *sheol*. But what does *sheol* mean? He finds that this, like most other words, has more than one meaning. He asks himself how it was understood by the learned translators, and finds that the word occurs sixty-five times in the Hebrew Bible, and that it is rendered *hell*, thirty-one

times, *grave*, thirty-one times, and *pit* three times. He soon disposes of the word *pit*. He finds that there are eleven other words in the Hebrew language which are sometimes rendered, *pit*, in English, and that in the three instances in which this word is rendered *pit*, it might just as well be rendered *grave* or *hell*. He is now satisfied that in translating the Hebrew *sheol* into English, he has to choose between *grave* and *hell*. *Grave*, means the place where a dead human body is deposited, and *hell*, means a place of punishment or suffering in the future world, after death and beyond the grave. With these two English words, with such widely differently meaning before him, he sets himself at work to determine which will best represent the sense of the Hebrew, *sheol*. It is natural to begin by taking the word in the order in which it occurs in the Bible, and he begins.

Jacob first uses the word, Gen. xxxvii. 35, "I will go down into the *grave*, [*sheol*] unto my son mourning." Surely, Jacob did not mean that he would go down into *hell*, as a place of future punishment. He takes the next text, Gen. xlii. 38, "Then shall ye bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the *grave*," [*sheol*.] Judah uses the same word in the same sense in his plea before Joseph. Gen. xlv. 29, 31.

This is sufficient, it is certain, that *sheol* means the grave. But may it not, like most words, have yet another meaning in some other texts? I must examine further. Here, in Deut. xxxii. 22, God speaks and says, "A fire is kindled in mine anger and shall burn into the *lowest hell*," [*sheol*.] Lowest grave would not be good sense, as all graves are equal. This looks as though *sheol* may mean a future place and state in which there are degrees of degradation and misery. Psal. ix. 17, "The wicked shall be turned into *hell*, [*sheol*], and all the nations that forget God." *Sheol*, is here used to denote the future place and condition of the wicked, as distinguished from the righteous; it cannot there mean the grave, because all the righteous and the nations that do not forget God, are turned into the grave, as certainly as are the wicked. It must refer to the place and state of the wicked after death and beyond the grave, the state of their immortal souls which find no resting place in the grave. Psal. xvi. 10, "My flesh shall rest in hope, for thou wilt not leave my soul in *hell*; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption."

It cannot be that David supposed that his soul would lodge in the grave. By *sheol*, here, he must have meant the place of departed spirits. But St. Peter understood this text as referring to Christ. Acts ii. 25-31, "For David speaketh concerning him, [Christ,] My flesh shall rest in hope, because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. He spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption." There is here a clear distinction between the soul and flesh, body. The soul of Christ did not go into the grave, but went into hell, *hadees*, the place of departed spirits. His body went into the grave, but did not see corruption, but was raised, and hence, his soul was not left in its separate state, but was called back to the reanimated body. Peter then understood David as speaking of the soul of Christ in *sheol*, not as in the grave, but as in the place of departed spirits.

Psal. xviii. 5, "The sorrows of hell compassed me about." The grave has no sorrows or joys, hence *sheol*, here, must mean a place of conscious suffering, from which the expression is borrowed.

Psal. cxvi. 3, "The pains of hell got hold upon me." There are no pains in the grave, hence *sheol* here must mean a place of suffering. It certainly appears that the word *sheol* has two meanings at least, that it denotes the grave in many cases, and that it also means the place of departed spirits.

The honest inquirer will, of course, before he closes his investigation, wish to know how the learned Seventy understood it, who translated the Old Testament into Greek. Taking up the Septuagent, that is, the Greek copy of the Old Testament, he finds, on comparison, that *sheol* has been uniformly rendered by the Greek word, *hadees*, and this word is used by Greek authors to denote the place of departed souls.

But to finish the investigation, the inquirer turns to the New Testament, and inquires in what sense the word *hell* is used there.

Here he finds two Greek words which are rendered hell. The first is *hadees*, which corresponds to the Hebrew, *sheol*. This word occurs eleven times in the New Testament. In one case only has it been translated grave. 1 Cor. xv. 55, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, [*hadees*,] where is thy victory?" In every

other case it is rendered hell, and in some of them at least could not be rendered grave. "The gates of *hell* shall not prevail against it." Matt. xvi. 18. "In hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torment." Luke xvi. 23. "His soul was not left in hell." Acts ii. 31.

The other word rendered hell is *ge-en-na*, which occurs twelve times, and has been rendered hell in every case, nor will it admit of being rendered grave. Matt. v. 22, "Shall be in danger of *hell fire*." It would not read well to render it "*grave fire*."

Mark ix. 47, "Cast into *hell fire*." It would not do to read, cast into "*grave fire*."

James iii. 6, "It is set on fire of hell." The grave sets nothing on fire.

But there is another Greek word, *mnē-emion*, which occurs more than forty times in the New Testament, and which has no other meaning in any one case than grave, tomb, or sepulchre. To finish the investigation the inquirer looks after the sentiments of the Jews on the subject of a future state, and finds that they believed in the separate existence of the souls of both good and bad men, and hence that they believed in a hell, in the yet unseen world. He is now ready to take the common definitions given in the Hebrew and Greek Lexicons. *Sheol*—the grave, a pit, any deep or dark place, any hid or unseen place, the unseen world, hell. *Hadees*—from *a*, negative, and *ido*, to see—a dark, obscure place; a place unseen, or not to be seen by mortals; the invisible world of spirits, the unseen place of souls; the place of the dead generally, hell. *Ge-en-na*, from Hebrew, the valley of Hinnom, where children were burned in sacrifice—hell, hell-fire; torments of hell.

Thus our inquirer ends his labors; he is satisfied that hell is really the name of a place in the unseen world of spirits; that it sometimes refers to the state of the dead in general, and sometimes to the state of the wicked, who suffer for their sins. He is satisfied that he has got at the right meaning of *Sheol*, *Hadees*, and *Ge-en-na*, but is satisfied also that it would have been just as well had he been willing to abide by the common translation, and saved himself much labor, and yet he feels that his labor has not been wholly lost. So much for the learned in the original languages. We have yet to consider two other classes of persons.

THE PULPIT.

By the Pulpit, we, of course, mean the ministry, not the platform or stand of wood from which the minister delivers his sermons. That may be of pine or mahogany, without affecting the real character of what we mean by the pulpit. By the use of the figure of speech called metonymy, the ministry is the living pulpit, and it is of this pulpit that we treat. As some days are cloudy, and others clear, so it is with the human mind, it is not always equally clear, and cannot always take the same graphic view of the same subject. We are sometimes impressed with the subject of the pulpit, in a manner which, if we could write under the influence of the same, would enable us to site the hearts of ministers, but we are soon jostled, in the busy round of life, and our attention is diverted to other important matters, and the inspiration on the subject is gone, until some new circumstance, or some new turn in the current of thought, brings back the impressions and views. Our limits will not allow us to pour out the fullness of our heart on the all-important subject—a few detached thoughts scattered through the numbers of our paper pulpit, is all that is possible for us to do.

The Pulpit, what it has been, what it is, what it should be, its responsibility to God, its relation to society, its field of action as a teacher, its work as a reformer, are all topics of thrilling interest. If there was only this one thought to give weight to these topics, it alone would render them awfully impressive, if fully realized,—the pulpit of the country, to a very great extent, represents the state of piety, the religious opinions, the moral tone, and the mental culture of the people. It might do injustice to the pulpit, to judge of it by the character of the people in every locality, and in every particular, but it is safe to judge the people by the pulpit, so far as to limit their attainments by the standard of the pulpit; no community, as a whole, will be found better and more elevated than the pulpit they support, and under whose instruction they sit. As are the views and habits of piety towards God, on the part of the pulpit, so will be found the people. As

are the moral tone and mental culture of the pulpit, so will be the people. The only exception to these remarks is found in the fact that portions of the people will fall below the standard of the pulpit, but no considerable portion will rise above it.

It is the work of the pulpit to speak for God, to teach and enforce God's truth, to teach and enforce all the duties of social life, and assuming this on its own part, and it being ceded to the pulpit on the part of the people, it can but occupy a position of tremendous responsibility, and exert an influence fearful in power, if perverted from the right.

CHRIST OUR ALL IN ALL.

The Lord Jesus Christ is the All-in-all of his redeemed. In every want he is their friend. In weakness he is their strength ; in sorrow, their joy ; in pain, their peace ; in poverty, their provider ; in sickness, their physician ; in hunger, their bread ; in trouble, their consolation ; in perplexity, their counsellor ; in the furnace, their refiner ; in the floods, their rock ; in assaults, their refuge ; in accusations, their advocate ; in debt, their surety ; in slavery, their ransom ; in captivity, their deliverer ; in the day, their sun ; in the night, their keeper ; in the desert, their shepherd. In life he is their hope ; in death, their life ; in the grave, their resurrection ; in heaven, their glory. Let Christ, therefore, be thy All-in-all for time and eternity. With the faithful martyr say, "None but Christ." Through all eternity say, "None but Christ." Let this triumphant name, "The Lord our Righteousness," settle every difficulty, solve every doubt, and silence every accusation.

When conscience tells thee thy sins are both many and great, answer thou, "Christ's blood cleanseth from all sin." When reminded of your ignorance, say, "Christ is my *wisdom*." When your ground and title to the kingdom are demanded, say, "Christ

is my *righteousness*." When your meetness to enter within its sacred walls is challenged, say, "Christ is my *sanctification*." When sin and the law, when death and Satan claim thee as their captive, reply to them all, "Christ is my *redemption*." The law saith, "Pay thy debt." The Gospel saith, "Christ hath paid it." The law saith, "Make amends for thy sins." The Gospel saith, "Christ hath made it for thee." The law saith, "Thou art a sinner ; despair, for thou shalt be condemned." The Gospel saith, "Thy sins are forgiven thee ; be of good comfort, thou shalt be saved."—*Stevenson*.

MINISTERS SHOULD BE TENDER AND AFFECTIONATE.

"I have learned one lesson," said the Rev. Mr. Hewitson, "by reading the Word in my illness. I see that, even when I preached with what I felt to be some measure of tenderness, I scarcely knew what Christ's tenderness was. The Bible gives not only the mind of God, but his heart. It is the latter, exhibited to men, which draws and wins. I could preach now, I think. I should be far more tender." "*Pectus est quod theologum facit*." It is the heart which makes the divine. Mere hard demonstrations do not win, they only steel the heart. Cecil speaks of preachers who "plant principles and prove points, but do not reach the heart." And how is the heart reached? Not by the refinements and distinctions of a dead orthodoxy, but by the exhibition of a living Christ. "Christ," says the writer just quoted, "cheers the prospect. Everything connected with him has light and gladness thrown around it. I look out of my window—the scene is scowling, dark, frigid, forbidding : I shudder—my heart is chilled. But let the sun break forth from the cloud—I can feel, I can act, I can spring. God," he adds, "descending and dwelling with man, is a truth so infinitely grand, that it must absorb all others."

THE WISDOM FROM ABOVE.

"The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy."—JAMES III. 17.

The apostle speaks of two kinds of wisdom, the first of which is worldly wisdom.

It is that kind of knowledge, and cunning which is associated with selfishness, and which produces bitter envyings and strife.

Of this the apostle says, "This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish." Verse 15.

Opposed to this, is the wisdom which is from above, which "is first pure, then peaceable."

This wisdom is the knowledge which God has communicated by inspiration.

This is found in the Scriptures.

It is perfected in the Gospel as a system of religion.

Gospel religion is the wisdom from above.

The effects of this religion is the subject treated of in the text, and I will attempt to exhibit its principle characteristics in the most simple textual manner.

1. It is from above.

It is from heaven, having God for its author.

Christianity is not of this world ; the world with all its boasted wisdom never found it out.

It is not the production of the human heart, otherwise the world would be christian by nature.

To this day, the world is in darkness where the Gospel does not shine.

It has God for its author.

It has Christ for its medium and example.

It has the Holy Ghost for its power.

From above in its origin.

From above in its nature.

From above in its power.

2. It is first pure.

Pure in itself, free from all that can corrupt or defile.

Pure as the mind of God is pure.

It is pure in its effects.

Its first effect is to make men pure.

It produces purity of heart and life, in every sense.

It makes men honest, sincere, holy.

It commands us to be pure, that is, holy, and comes to us with a morally renovating power, sufficient to make us pure.

3. It is then peaceable ; that is, its next effect, after producing purity, is to produce peace, or to render men peaceable.

Peace follows purity ; the pure in heart will seek peace and promote it where they can.

A contentious man does not exhibit christianity in his spirit.

“ While zeal for truth christian warms,
He knows the worth of peace.”

If he is compelled to contend, he will do it in a manner which will evince his love of peace.

God is the God of peace, and Christ is the Prince of peace, and all christians should be peaceable in heart and conduct.

4. It makes men gentle, that is, moderate, kind, mild, not violent, harsh, rude or boisterous.

A true christian is gentle.

It is from this word that we derive the word, gentleman.

True religion, if lived out, would make every man a gentleman, and every woman a lady.

It is a great mistake, to suppose that to escape pride, and show our humility, we must manifest contempt for refinement and easy manners, by appearing coarse and vulgar.

Such have but a rude piety.

5. It is easy to be entreated, that is, easy to be persuaded, compliant.

Not easy persuaded to wrong.

The true christian is yielding where it is right to yield.

He is not headstrong, willful or obstinate.

He forgives readily and freely when entreated.

He sacrifices his own convenience to accommodate others.

6. It is full of mercy, that is, disposed to show compassion to others.

A truly christian heart feels for the woes of others, and will relieve them when it can be done.

"Blessed are the merciful," &c. Matt. v. 7.

7. It is full of good fruits, that is, good works, right living.

Fruits of piety, justice, honesty and benevolence.

8. It is without partiality.

Partiality is a disposition to favor one party, or one side of a question.

This bias of mind must spring from the will and affections, and not from the love of right, truth and justice, to render it partiality in an evil sense.

Partiality is an inclination to one party or side, without a reason founded in the love of right.

Pure christianity knows no distinctions, only what depend upon moral character.

It holds an even hand between man and man, and knows no caste but the caste of sin, and the caste of holiness.

9. It is without hypocrisy, that is, it is what it professes to be, without disguise or mask.

Pure religion has nothing which it is necessary to conceal.

Its mission is to make itself known, world wide.

It has no covering for sin and wrong doing.

Its work is to expose, forsake, and banish sin, and its success would drive sin from the world.

A true christian, is, therefore, what he professes to be, without hypocrisy.

His actions and words correspond to the thoughts and feelings of his heart.

REMARKS.

1. It is important that we examine ourselves and see if our religion possesses these essential attributes.

If it does not, we have not yet got the wisdom that is from above.

We need not be deceived.

Those who have these heavenly fruits may know it.

Those who are destitute of them may also know that fact if they will.

Is the gospel, as it has been presented, a glass, in which you see your own religious character?

If so, you may thank God and take courage, and seek a more full development of all these christian virtues.

If you are in doubt, rest not one hour without knowing that you are a true christian.

Live not as the poet says,

“’Tis a point I long to know,
Oft it causes anxious thought,
Do I love the Lord or no,
Am I his or am I not?”

If we find we have not these elements of true religion in our character, we should at once embrace christianity, and the Holy Spirit will impress all of these graces upon our hearts.

Come sinner, be a christian.

2. How wonderfully is christianity adapted to bless and save the world.

Were it impressed upon every heart in this congregation, what a reform there would be.

Were it impressed upon the hearts of the world, the world would be, “Pure, peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.”

THE DIVINE IMPARTIALITY.

“Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation he that feareth him and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.”—Acts x. 34, 35.

It was necessary that God should have a distinct and peculiar people, as a means of preparing the way for the advent of Christ, and the organization of the Gospel Church, with its world-wide invitations and offers of salvation.

This he secured by the call of Abraham, and a train of providential dealings with his descendants.

The Jews so misconstrued the peculiar favors bestowed upon them, as to regard them as proofs of God’s partiality towards them.

It was necessary, at the opening of the Gospel mission to the Gentile world, to correct these limited and false views.

The call of Peter to the house of Cornelius was among the means which God employed to secure this end.

He first prepared the mind of Peter by the vision of the sheet let down from heaven, and then shed upon the Gentiles, in his presence, the same gift of the Spirit, which he had previously bestowed upon the Jewish converts.

The effect produced upon Peter's mind is seen in the text.

"Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons."

The text suggests as a topic,

God's equal regard for, and impartial treatment of all men.

This great truth is presented in the text in two distinct forms.

I. IT IS AFFIRMED, AS AN ABSTRACT PRINCIPLE, THAT GOD IS NO RESPECTER OF PERSONS.

This is equal to an affirmation that God is impartial, that he deals with all men upon the same equal principles of eternal rectitude.

It does not regard the incidental distinctions which are found among men and nations, but relates to the fundamental principles upon which God dispenses the blessing of salvation, and settles the eternal destiny of humanity.

On these great questions, God deals with all men upon the same equal principle ; that is, he is no respecter of persons.

To respect persons, is to regard them, or to favor them, on account of some outward circumstance, something extrinsic to the person.

Not to respect persons, is to treat all with regard to their real character, what is intrinsic.

God so deals with all men.

1. God has made the same provision for the salvation of all men that he has for any.

Christ, "by the grace of God, tasted death for every man."

2. God extends the same Gospel invitations to all that he does to any portion of humanity.

The Gospel commission is to every creature, and the promise of salvation to all who will comply with its conditions.

3. God has given to all the same law, offering to each the same rewards, and threatening the same punishment.

4. God has appointed the same judgment for all, for settling the final destiny of humanity.

II. GOD'S EQUAL REGARD FOR, AND IMPARTIAL TREATMENT OF ALL MEN, IS AFFIRMED BY A SPECIFIC STATEMENT OF THE TERMS ON WHICH ACCEPTANCE IS FOUND WITH HIM.

"In every nation, he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him."

Two conditions are stated, or two branches of duty required.

1. We must fear God.

Fear, here denotes the whole of piety towards God.

It includes reverence, mingled with love, which produces devotion and all obedience.

It includes the first table of the law.

2. We must work righteousness.

Righteousness, is right actions, springing from right motives.

It here refers to those actions which regard our fellow beings, and ourselves.

It includes all that is embraced in the second table of the law.

3. It is affirmed that in every nation, he that thus fears God, and works righteousness, is accepted of him.

This acceptance implies pardon, regeneration, and the witness of the Spirit, and final salvation.

It is extended to each and all of every nation on the same terms.

REMARKS.

The above doctrine of the divine impartiality has an important bearing upon the two most vital of all ³⁴ questions, human duty, and human destiny.

1. It throws open the door wide for the reformation and return of every sinner to God.

This fact carries with it the duty of every sinner to reform, by beginning at once to fear God, and to work righteousness.

The power and means are all within the sinner's grasp.

Cornelius enjoyed less light than sinners of this land and age.

The door of acceptance with God is open wide, equally wide to each and all.

2. The subject clearly throws upon humanity the responsibility of its own destiny.

The fault is with sinners, that they are not now accepted with God.

God's terms are easy and equal.

Some have found acceptance, and all might, if they would fear him and work righteousness.

3. While the responsibility rests with sinners, if they perish, the glory all belongs to God, if they are saved.

To fear God and work righteousness, is not to merit salvation or acceptance with God.

It is a mere condition of acceptance, not a price paid for it.

The acceptance is of God's free grace. The righteousness is evangelical, wrought through faith in Christ.

4. The light of the judgment will develop this doctrine, in both the saved and the lost.

The saved will give the glory to God, the lost will condemn themselves.

THE DANGER OF RESISTING THE SPIRIT.

"Quench not the Spirit."—1 THESS. v. 19.

The Spirit of God is repeatedly represented as fire.

"He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire."
Matt. iii. 11.

"There appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire."
Acts ii. 3.

The language of the text implies that there is a resemblance between fire and the Spirit of God, and that as fire may be quenched, so may also the Spirit be quenched by some similar process.

Let me then call your attention,

I. TO THE ANALOGY BETWEEN FIRE AND THE SPIRIT OF GOD.

1. Fire is light, and so is the Spirit of God light to the mind.

2. Fire is heat, or never exists without heat.

A degree of warmth is essential to our animal life.

So is the Spirit of God warming and invigorating in its influence.

It inspires zeal and activity, and gives vigor to the pulsations of moral life.

3. Fire is refining and purifying in its action.

So is the Spirit of God the great refiner and sanctifier of human souls.

4. Fire always burns with an ascending motion ; its tendency is upward.

So does the Spirit draw us upward to the skies.

II. THE MANNER IN WHICH THE SPIRIT MAY BE QUENCHED, IN THE LIGHT OF THE ANALOGY ALREADY EXPLAINED.

1. When fire is quenched, as it is called, when it is extinguished, is put out, or goes out, it is not destroyed, is not annihilated.

It is only driven away, diffused, dispersed.

The Spirit is grieved and caused to depart when it is said to be quenched.

It is against this evil that the apostle admonishes us.

2. Fire is most readily quenched by the application of water.

As water is to fire, so is sin to the Spirit of God.

3. Fire may be extinguished by excluding the air.

Partial exclusion of the air will preserve it by causing it to burn slowly, but it must have air to burn.

So the Spirit of God may be quenched by suppressing its promptings.

To increase its action we must let it blaze out.

4. Fire will become extinct if we neglect to add fuel.

As fuel is to fire, so is the discharge of duty to the operation of the Spirit.

III. LET ME URGE UPON YOU THE APOSTLE'S EXHORTATION.

"Quench not the Spirit."

1. The Spirit is your light ; if you quench it, you will be left in darkness forever.

2. The Spirit is the heat, the power of your moral life ; if you quench it, the frost of eternal death will chill and blight you forever.

3. The Spirit is your refiner and purifier ; if you quench it, pollution will cleave to you forever.

4. The Spirit is the influence that must elevate you to heaven ; if you quench it, you will cling to earth and sink forever.

“ The Spirit calls to-day,
Yield to its power ;
O grieve it not away,
’Tis mercy’s hour.”

CHRIST KNOCKING AT THE HEART.

“ Behold I stand at the door and knock. If any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in unto him, and sup with him and he with me.”—REV. III. 20.

Christ is the speaker in this text.

The address is to all men, for he says, “ if any man hear.”

It is figurative language.

The door is the heart.

The knocking denotes the means Christ employs to get possession of the sinner’s heart.

I. HOW DOES CHRIST KNOCK AT THE DOOR OF THE HEART ?

1. The influence of the truth.

Christ knocks by his word, both read and preached.

Every precept, every promise, and every threatening, should move the sinner’s heart.

2. The influence of the Spirit.

Sinners often hear this, knocking at their hearts.

About their business.

As they walk by the way.

At night during the sleepless hour.

It stirs up conscience and suggest thoughts.

3. Christ often employs special providences to open the sinner’s heart.

Both mercies and judgments are employed.

II. THE CONDITION UPON WHICH CHRIST WILL ENTER THE HEART.

1. We must hear his voice.

To hear, in a gospel sense, is to give heed to.

There must be an acknowledgement of his right to the heart.

He will not enter as a trespasser ; we must admit his right.

2. We must open the door.

The heart is represented as a barred door.

Sin shuts Christ out, and the sinner must open the door by renouncing it.

Unbelief shuts Christ out, and the sinner must open the door by believing.

The key is on the inside ; moral agency.

To open the door is for the sinner to do his duty ; to do what he can do, repent and believe.

III. THE ADVANTAGES OF ENTERTAINING THE ROYAL GUEST.

1. It is a matter of high consideration to have Christ dwell in the heart.

It is regarded as an honor to entertain great men.

2. If Christ enters the heart, he will fit it for himself.

It needs purifying.

3. Christ will sup with us.

He brings in the feast with him.

It will be pardon, peace, love, joy, and hope.

4. We shall sup with him.

He, having feasted with us here, will bring us to feast with him in heaven.

"They shall hunger no more, neither shall they thirst any more, for the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them to living fountains of water." Rev vii. 16, 17.

REMARKS.

1. Christ's long suffering and continued effort is a wonder of mercy.

He knocks and waits long.

He waits until his "head is wet with dew, and his locks with the drops of the night."

2. The sinner's resistance to Christ is a wonder of crime.

Suppose a person to shut himself up in famine and starvation, and refuse to open the door that provision might be brought up to him.

He shuts himself up in famine, who shuts Christ out of his heart.

3. If sinners will not open their hearts to Christ, when he knocks, when they shall find themselves excluded from Christ's kingdom, and shall knock, Christ will not open to them.

THE ONLY SECURE REFUGE.

"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble, therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea ; though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof. There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High. God is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved ; God shall help her and that right early."—PSALM XLV. 1-5.

I have not selected this long text with the expectation of giving a detailed exposition of all its parts.

I shall only attempt to seize upon the grand outline, and present such great truths as may be gathered from its surface, and as are applicable to our condition.

It cannot be disguised that these are dark days, that we are in the midst of perilous times.

A darker storm never hung over this land since the day when the nation leaped into existence, from the very face of the tempest cloud of war.

The nation rocks with the earthquake of rebellion, and the impulses of religion are almost suppressed amid the struggling elements of war ; the hallowed fires burn but dimly on Jehovah's altars, while battle fires glow intensely on fields of human gore.

The strife, it is true, has not yet come near our quiet homes, but our husbands, and sons, and fathers have gone forth to the conflict, and our quiet circles are full of sorrow and mourning for the slain.

Amid such scenes as these, how divinely adapted to our circumstances are the words of the text. Hear it, O ye fearful and troubled ones !

What glorious truth flashes from every word as sunbeams to

gild the cloud, and span the face of the storm with the rainbow of hope.

Let us attempt to draw out some of these truths for practical use in these trying times.

I. THE TEXT GLOWS WITH THE GREAT DOCTRINE OF AN OVERRULING PROVIDENCE.

1. It is affirmed that God is our refuge.

A refuge is a shelter or protection from danger or distress.

Such a refuge is God to all that fly to him for safety.

No matter whether it be an individual, a family, or a nation.

"The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms." Duet. xxxiii. 27.

A refuge supposes danger.

The path of life is full of danger, and it is only while God shields us that we walk safely.

"In him we live, and move and have our being." Acts xvii. 28.

2. It is affirmed that God is our strength.

This can be true only upon the ground of an everywhere active Providence.

This supposes human weakness, and it is through human weakness that the power of God is revealed and glorified.

How many times has he turned aside the fatal hour, and lifted up our sinking heads, in matters that no human arm could reach?

3. It is affirmed that God is a very present help in trouble.

Trouble is any disturbance of mind, any thing that causes disturbance of mind, or vexation.

How many evils beset the path of life which may be called trouble.

In all of these God is a very present help.

How emphatic, "*A very present help.*"

He grants help to bear our troubles.

He delivers us from our troubles; he brings us out of them.

He overrules them for our good.

4. It is affirmed by implication, that God is an ever-springing source of gladness to his church and people.

"There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High."

The city of God, then, meant Jerusalem.

It is applicable to the Church.

The river must denote God's ever-active providence and flowing bounty.

It cannot be literal, for no river watered Jerusalem.

In it the order of nature is reversed ; in nature, streams make a river, but here the river sends out streams.

God's gracious providence sends out a thousand streams of gladness and consolation.

The figure may be borrowed from the Nile, from which a thousand little channels were dug by which the fields were irrigated.

These were closed or opened at pleasure.

So God is ever gracious, and has prepared channels for his own goodness.

These may be opened by prayer.

The great water-works of the city of New York is a striking illustration.

Here the doctrine of divine Providence reaches its climax in the church.

"God is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved ; God shall help her and that right early."

II. THE TEXT PUTS UPON OUR LIPS THE STRONGEST EXPRESSIONS POSSIBLE, OF UNSHAKEN CONFIDENCE IN GOD, AND OF UNDISTURBED REPOSE, AMID THE MOST TERRIFIC SCENES THAT EARTH AND TIME CAN EVER KNOW.

"Therefore will not we fear."

Those who fear God have nothing else to fear, and those who really trust in him will not fear.

The most fearful disorders and commotions are named to show how great is the confidence in God.

"Though the earth be removed."

The earth is represented as being removed to denote great political revolutions.

Though kingdoms and empires shake and fall, yet will not we fear.

"Though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea," yet will not we fear.

Sea, denotes unorganized masses of people, and mountains, civil rulers and governments.

A very strong figure to denote the overthrow of governments and states.

"Though the waters of the sea roar and be troubled," by the mountains falling into them, yet will not we fear.

Though the people are excited and tumultuous like the swelling of the sea, yet will we trust in God.

"Though the mountains shake with the swelling of the sea," yet will not we fear.

Though governments, states, and rulers shake from the general scenes of commotion around, we will not fear.

"The man in conscious virtue bold,
Who dares his honest purpose hold,
Unshaken hears the crowd's tumultuous cries ;
And the impetuous tyrant's angry brow defies.
Let the wild winds that rule the seas,
All their tempestuous horrors raise ;
Let Jove's dread arm with thunders rend the spheres,
Beneath the crush of worlds, undaunted he appears."

APPLICATION.

1. The subject is applicable to our present condition as a nation.

God reigns over the destiny of this nation ; his providential hand planted it, and he will preserve it, so long as it can answer any good purpose.

To make the nation a blessing to itself and to the world, it must be redeemed from the crime and corruptions of slavery.

God is the God of human rights, of universal liberty.

In the providence of God, slavery has been blotted out from almost the entire civilized world, save in this land.

Could anything short of war have destroyed it in this nation ?

Could a war have been produced in any other way, but by slavery itself, that would have overthrown it ?

Slavery must be destroyed, or it will destroy the nation.

But it is felt an evil that the innocent suffer with the guilty.

But how few are innocent in regard to slavery.

The innocent always have suffered with the guilty.

We have only to do our duty, and trust God, and let the nation rock, and rejoice that Jehovah reigns, who can shake the world.

Let parties strive, and rise and fall, let states dash on states, if in their madness they will, the elements are all in God's hand, who carries the thunders in his fist, and flings the lightnings from his fingers !

2. The subject is applicable to the church in general.

God will preserve it ; " God is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved ; God shall help her, and that right early."

3. The subject is applicable to this little local church, and should inspire us with confidence.

If there be a church here, God is in the midst of her.

4. The subject is applicable to every individual, who will make God his refuge.

THE IMPROVEMENT OF TIME.

BY REV. R. DONKERSLEY.

" Redeeming the time."—Eph. v. 16.

PROEM. Perhaps it is safe to affirm that among the innumerable blessings conferred upon man by his Creator, there is only one that excels in value the rich boon of time, viz. God's gift of his Son for the redemption of the world.

We cannot conceive of any blessing this side the eternal world which is not dependent upon time for its reception, its retention and its enjoyment. But, notwithstanding the incalculable value of our fleeting moments, how carelessly are they wasted—thrown away. There are but few who seem to make any proper estimate of this boon—transcendently more valuable than the most highly prized minerals ever dug from the earth, or the brightest gems gathered from ocean bed.

The lamentable waste of time appears not to be a sin peculiar to the present generation of mankind. All generations of men have been guilty of such abuse. The prayer of the Psalmist would seem to indicate that such sin characterized the age in which he lived. "So teach us to number our days, that we may

apply our hearts unto wisdom." Ps. xc. 12. That this sin prevailed in apostolic times we may rationally infer from the fact that in writing to two different Churches, St. Paul gives the admonition, "Redeeming the time."

TOPIC :—HOW MAY TIME BE REDEEMED ?

Some one has defined time as "a fragment broken off at both ends from the middle of eternity."

Noah Webster gives us not less than eleven distinct definitions of the word "Redeem." Most of these are quite foreign to our present purpose. One of those definitions is, "To save." This is, evidently, the sense in which the apostle here employs the term.

The plain and obvious import of the exhortation before us is—that we so economize our time, that during the brief period of our sojourn on earth, we may accomplish the greatest amount of good for God, for our fellow-man, and for ourselves.

How then may we the most effectually redeem time ?

Much time might be redeemed from unnecessary sleep.

What a shameful waste of time many are guilty of, arising from superfluous slumbers. Is it affirming too much to say that a large proportion of mankind spend one-third more time in sleep than their constitution requires. Rarely do we find the slave of excessive sleep excelling in any undertaking. Such a man is usually slothful in his habits even when awake ; or, more strictly speaking, he rarely ever is more than half awake. Solomon graphically portrays such a character. Prov. xxiv. 30-34.

But some may be ready to inquire—"How much, or how little sleep is necessary?" The reply to this question must depend upon circumstances, as—sex—a firm or a nervous temperament—physical or mental pursuits, etc. But a few experiments of gradually abridging the hours devoted to nightly repose, may enable any of us to determine the precise amount of sleep necessary to health of body and vigor of mind.

The difference between seven or ten hours sleep, per diem, would give ninety-one days and three hours per annum. Or, in a life of seventy years, it would make the difference of about seventeen years and a half. Now, let it be supposed that this time is employed either in well remunerated manual labors, or in intellectual pursuits, or in doing good to others, what astonishing re-

sults we should behold. This time hired out at one dollar a day—omitting the Sabbath—would give \$5,477 50. Put this money out to compound interest as soon as earned, how vast the aggregate would be.

Much time might be redeemed by abstaining from useless and unprofitable visits.

How shamefully time is thus squandered. "But would you forbid us visiting our friends at all?" By no means. The social element is strong within us. God himself implanted it there. But does not this social element often degenerate into the mere indulgence of low tattle, or of mischievous slander? It is quite lawful and proper to indulge this love of each other's society whenever we are fully convinced that we can thus more than by any other means—mutually contribute to each other's becoming wiser, better, and more useful. Social intercourse which does not contribute to one, or other, or all of these results is such waste of precious time as no reflecting Christian will allow himself to be guilty of.

Many persons might redeem nearly half their life's time by laying aside uninteresting and unprofitable reading. The vast amount of literary trash that finds a market in our nation, tells a sad story upon waste of precious time.

A judicious division of our time—each portion having its allotted duties, will greatly aid in the redemption now under consideration.

That is a good old maxim which says—"A place for everything, and everything in its place." Equally wise is the maxim which says—"A season for everything, and everything in its season." Method, system, order, are terms of significant import with the man who places a high estimate upon the value of time. The following from Rev. James Hamilton of London, may serve as some illustration of our meaning here :

"A man has got twenty or thirty letters or packets to carry to their several destinations. But instead of arranging them beforehand, and putting all addressed to the same locality in a separate parcel, he crams the whole into his promiscuous bag, and trudges off to the west, for he knows that he has got a letter directed thither. That letter he delivers, and hies away to the east,

when lo ! the same handful which brings out the invoice for Merchant's Row, contains a brief for the Court House, and a petition which should have been left, had he noticed it earlier, at the Capitol. Accordingly, he retraces his steps and repairs the omission, and then performs a transit from the north to the south ; till in two days he overtakes the work of one, and travels fifty miles to accomplish as much as a man of method would have managed in fifteen."

Punctuality and promptitude will greatly assist in economizing time.

Whatever engagements you may make with yourself or with others, meet them at the moment they are due. Whatever business now demands your attention, *do it now*. Allow us another quotation from Dr. Hamilton :

"A singular mis-chance has happened to some of our friends. At the instant when he ushered them into being, God gave them a work to do, and he also gave them a competency of time, so much time that if they had begun at the right moment, and wrought with sufficient vigor, their time and their work would have ended together. But a great many years ago a strange misfortune befell them, a fragment of their allotted time was lost. They cannot tell what became of it, but, sure enough, it has dropped out of existence ; for, just like two measuring lines laid together, the one an inch shorter than the other, their work and their time run parallel, but the work is always ten minutes in advance of the time. They are not irregular. They are never too soon. Their letters are posted the very minute after the mail is shut. They arrive at the wharf just in time to see the steamer off. They come in sight of the depot precisely when the train starts. They do not break any engagement, nor neglect any duty, but, they systematically go about it too late, and usually too late by about the same fatal interval."

Have no spare moments, or idle hours.

A gentleman once called upon Rev. Joseph Benson, and informed him that he had come to spend an idle hour with him. The intruder was laconically informed by that dilligent student, that Joseph Benson never had any idle hours. What a vast amount of work might be accomplished during a life-time, if all spare moments were scrupulously redeemed.

Chancellor D'Augesseau, finding that his wife always kept him waiting a quarter of an hour after the dinner bell had rung, resolved to devote the time to writing a book on Jurisprudence, and, putting the project into execution, in course of time produced a work in four quarto volumes.

Consecrate all the time you can command to direct efforts to save the souls of men.

No time is lost which is faithfully consecrated thus.

CONSIDERATIONS WHICH ENFORCE THIS ADMONITION.

Time is too precious to be squandered.

The manner in which God deals out time to us, may suffice to enable us to form some idea of the estimate he places upon its value. God gives time, not by years, or months, or weeks, or days, but by *moments*.

"Time flows from instants, and of these, each one
Should be esteemed as if it were alone."

The uncertainty of its continuance, and the rapidity of its flight. Job. xiv. 1, 2; Psalms xc. 5, 6; cii. 11; cv. 15; James iv. 13, 14.

"Ceaselessly the weaver, Time,
Sitteth at his mystic loom,
Keeps his arrowy shuttle flying,
Every thread aneers our dying."—*W. H. Burleigh*.

Our use of time will have an important bearing upon our eternal destiny, and upon the future destiny of others.

"Time the shuttle drives, but you
Give every thread its hue,
And elect your destiny."—*Burleigh*.

"Time is eternity,
Pregnant with all eternity can give,
Who murders time, crushes in the birth
A power etherial, only not adored."—*Young*.

EXPOSITION.

"Work out your own salvation."—*PHL. I. 12, 13.*

There is a depth in human depravity which the best on earth have never been able fully to fathom. "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?"

He only who can fully search it knows its wickedness and its deceitfulness. We are very prone to wander from God, and to run into error on the most important of all subjects—subjects which have a direct bearing on our own individual condition and character. There have been self-deceivers in all past ages. In the primitive age of the church, when the inspired Apostles were preaching the gospel and planting churches, many of the Jews thought that they were to secure God's favor and obtain ultimate and eternal salvation on the ground of their own works. They thought that they were to be justified by the establishment of their own righteousness: they believed that their own obedience to the law would give them a title to heaven. See Gal. ii. 21; Rom. ix. 31, 32.

There was another class who professed to be saved,—who said they believed the gospel,—that all was well with them for eternity; and yet they remained inactive, unholy and antinomian at heart, and in life. Their practice was not in harmony with either their own profession or the principles of Christianity. Their faith was not a living but a dead faith; they said, as James in his Epistle clearly shows, that they had faith only in profession; but they were destitute at once of true evangelical faith and its legitimate fruits. James ii. 14, 26.

There are many who run into both of the above mentioned errors at the present day. The truth of the gospel understood and believed, will, we are confident, not only save from Pharisaism on the one hand and antinomianism on the other, but lead to obedience, to holiness, to heaven. The apostle, it is important to notice, is not addressing unconverted sinners when he says, "Work out your own salvation." By no means: he was too well acquainted with systematic theology, with practical religion, with experimental Christianity, to do any such thing. The first duty of an unconverted sinner is to believe the gospel, or in other words, to receive Christ. "Without me," says the Saviour, "ye can do nothing. "To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness."

When the apostle therefore says, *Work out your own salvation*, he must be addressing those who have believed the Gospel, those

who have received Christ, and in whose hearts the work of grace has had a commencement. This is abundantly evident from the context as well as from the nature of the case. The Epistle, as we learn from the first verse of the first chapter, is addressed "to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons." In the fifth verse he speaks of their "fellowship in the gospel;" and in the sixth of his confidence "of this very thing, that he who had commenced the good work in them would perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." See also verse 29.

This injunction then, you perceive, is not addressed to unbelievers but to believers; or, in other words, to the friends and followers of Christ.

Notice now what it is that Christians are called upon to work out,—it is *their own salvation*. If we are Christians, this injunction is addressed to us. We are to work out our own salvation. This is doubtless a great privilege, but Paul speaks of it here as a duty; and he presents very strong motives and inducements to encourage us to go on with and achieve the great work.

Of course there is no reference here to salvation from the curse of the law, or the condemning power of sin. This is a work too great and too difficult for us to accomplish ourselves, or any of the angels in heaven to accomplish for us. O it is delightful to know that faith, simple faith, faith alone without works, puts us in possession of salvation from condemnation. "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." "There is therefore now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus." To work out our own salvation from the condemning power of sin or the curse of God's holy law, is what we never can do, what we are not required to do. O no: the Divine Man by his sufferings, and sacrifice, and death, has done it for us.

But we need salvation from the polluting influence of sin,—from its contaminating, and demoralizing influence. In other words, we need *sanctification*. Even the best of God's people on earth are but partially purified. We need to grow in grace, in knowledge, in spirituality of mind. We need to develop our moral Character, imbibe the spirit of Christ, love, and live the law of love, and conform our outer and inner man to its holy requirements. We are to crucify the flesh with its affections and

its lusts ; to put off the old man, and put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. We are to forget the things which are behind, and press on toward the mark. I am to work out *my own* salvation ; you are to work out your own salvation. Each Christian is to perform his own duties, not the duties devolving upon some one else. Hence the injunction, work out *your own* salvation. Yet there is a most important sense in which it is our imperative duty to work out *each other's* salvation. We can do much to increase the faith, the knowledge, the holiness, the heavenly-mindedness of our fellow Christians. We can pray for one another, labor for the spiritual and eternal well-being of one another. In this way the people can work out the salvation of the pastor, and the pastor the salvation of his people ; in this way the members of the church can work out not only their own individual salvation, but also the salvation of one another, and the sanctification of the church of which they are members. Let us, dear Christian reader, be in future more active in working out our own salvation ; let us "give all diligence, adding to our faith, virtue ; and to virtue, knowledge ; and to knowledge, temperance ; and to temperance, patience ; and to patience, godliness ; and to godliness, brotherly kindness ; and to brotherly kindness, charity. For if these things be in us and abound, they make us that we shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ."

You will notice also that we are to work out our own sanctification "*with fear and trembling.*" There are various kinds of fear spoken of in scripture, but the fear of which the apostle here speaks is obviously the fear of dishonoring or displeasing God. We are to fear God. "The fear of the Lord," we are told, "is the beginning of wisdom."

We are also to distrust our own evil wicked and wayward hearts. The injunction, "with fear and trembling" is something like, "let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." Or, "Take heed brethren lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. Let us therefore fear, lest a promise being left us of entering into his rest any of you should seem to come short of it." These cautions and counsels are not opposed to christian confidence, but to carnal secu-

riety, presumptuous boasting, and spiritual pride. Then the Apostle states the grand motive by which this practical injunction is enforced, and the encouragement which every christian has to work out his own sanctification. "For it is God who worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." "It is God who worketh."

We know that God is at work in every part of creation ; he governs all, rules over all, is in all, and through all, and upholds all. The apostle is, however, here speaking of God being graciously present by the operations of his Spirit in the hearts of his people.

The Holy Spirit sanctifies, or purifies the heart by faith. This by no means proves that Christians are passive while the progressive work of sanctification is effected ; for both scripture and consciousness testify that believers *work out their own salvation*. But God worketh in us "*to will*." That is, as we understand it, there is an influence from without us, a divine influence inducing or disposing us to will our own sanctification. Without the pleading, and drawing, the wooing and subduing influences of the Spirit of God, we, as sinners, never would have become believers, and, as believers, never would grow in sanctification. Christians who hunger after holiness, and who earnestly desire to reach nearer and nearer to perfection, know and feel that it is God working in them through the agency of his Spirit, through the instrumentality of his own truth, and through their own agency. The fact that *they will their own* sanctification by no means proves that they seek it of their *own accord*. God does not drag them to it, or drives them to it, but he disposes them to *will it*, or to *wish it*. But this is not all : he disposes them to *do* as well as to *desire* ; to *work* as well as to wish. Work out your own sanctification ; for it is God that worketh in you both to will it, and to work it out. He never leaves any of his people to save themselves from the polluting influence of sin as best they may. If he did, alas for our progress in holiness. But here and in many other parts of his word we are told that he co-operates with us. He never sanctifies us without our agency : we never make progress without his agency. Both are active when the work of sanctification is accomplished. It is a dangerous error for any

sinner to believe that he must remain passive until he is regenerated ; and it is an error no less dangerous for any one to fancy that his agency can be dispensed with in the development of his moral character.

The passage which we are now considering plainly teaches us, that there is an unseen influence peculiarly divine, put forth in the salvation of the soul, and that there is a co-operation with God on the part of all who are saved. I cannot be saved or sanctified unless God works in me to will and to do : but it is not God that is spoken of here as willing, or doing ; God works, it is true, because he *wills to work* ; but he works in me that I may *will to work*. The willing and the doing are mine, both mine ; the furnishing of the instrumentality,—and the removing of all indisposition to will, and to do, are his. In one word, it is God that purifies our hearts, *by faith*. Dear reader, you must work out your own salvation, if it is ever to be done.—*Canadian Day-Star*.

RECEIVING A KINGDOM.

“Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear.”
—HEB. XII. 28.

The chapter out of which these words are selected is one of the most sublime in the Bible. Here is a striking contrast drawn between the two dispensations ; the law is set forth in all its terrific grandeur, and the gospel in all its glorious grace. In the passage we have

CHRISTIAN PRIVILEGE ACKNOWLEDGED.—*Contemplate its nature*.—“A kingdom.” It is widely different from the kingdoms of this world, being spiritual in its principles, and sacred in its interests. Of this kingdom, Christ is the Monarch, the heart is the throne, grace is the septre, the Bible is the law, and glory the end.

Its stability.—“Which cannot be moved.” This is in opposition to the passing away of the Old Testament dispensation. Its past

stability is a pledge of its future endurance. The kingdom of Christ is firm, and shall continue the same in its character, principles, laws, constitutions, privileges, and immunities. The lapse of time, the attacks of infidels, the rage of persecutors, and the malice of devils cannot move it.

How we become interested in it.—"Receiving." Whereas by faith we embrace Christ, we become members of his kingdom.

CHRISTIAN DUTY RECOMMENDED.—Consider *What it includes*. "Serving God." Our aim should be to do this acceptably, and the manner, "with reverence and godly fear." We must avoid the forwardness of presumption and cultivate humility. Thus to serve God, is to yield ourselves implicitly to him.

What it requires.—"Grace." It is not to be accomplished by natural ability. Without a new heart we cannot have the disposition to serve God, and without grace we cannot have the power. *Where is it to be obtained?*—"Let us have grace." The source is divine—but the means are human. Seek it from him who is the God of all grace.—*Temple*.

FINE THOUGHTS IN FEW WORDS.

Ministers are but stars to light others to Christ. The Spirit is the loadstone to draw them to him. If we would have the door of blessing opened to us through the ministry, we must unlock it with the key of prayer.

The lovely bird of paradise, Christian Contentment, can sit and sing in the cage of affliction and confinement, or fly at liberty through the vast expanse, with almost equal satisfaction; whilst "Even so, Father, for so it seemeth good in thy sight," is the chief note of the celestial song.

Outward attacks and troubles rather fix than unsettle the Christian, as tempests from without only serve to root the oak faster, whilst an inward canker will gradually rot and decay it.

BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION.

THE SCRIPTURES CONSIDERED AS A TRANSLATION.

In our last, we labored to show how the learned might satisfy themselves in regard to the sense of the Scriptures. Another class is composed of such as have a good English education, and have access to libraries for information, but still have no knowledge of the Hebrew and Greek, in which the Scriptures were written. How may they know that the English Scriptures fairly represent the sense of the original?

1. They understand the time and manner of the translation, and can see nothing connected with the whole proceeding, calculated to awaken suspicion. This state of facts renders it most reasonable that they should receive the English version, as a faithful translation of the original, until proof is produced to the contrary.

2. No such proof has ever been attempted. It is universally admitted that the translation is a good one; and while many think it might be improved in some unimportant particulars, and some persons think there are some few important errors, very few, if any, believe a better translation, as a whole, could now be produced if the trial were to be made. This must make a very clear case in the minds of the candid.

3. In the few cases where some suppose important errors have been committed, there can be but little difficulty with the honest, who wish only to know the truth that they may do it.

They can read what has been written on both sides, and compare the disputed texts with parallel texts admitted to be rightly translated, and with the general teaching of the Scriptures on the subject, and form a sane judgment.

We will illustrate by a single text the process by which an intelligent English scholar may investigate and satisfy his mind. Acts iii. 19. "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord."

This reading appears to make their present repentance and conversion, a condition of the blotting out of their sins at some future time, "*when* the times of refreshing shall come from the pre-

sence of the Lord." But the whole tenor of the Gospel offers present pardon to all repenting sinners, and the text must be so interpreted as to make it offer present pardon.

To do this some translate it thus, "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, that the times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord." Now, how is the English reader to know which translation is the true one?

(1.) It makes good and clear sense in itself. The common translation is obscure and difficult to understand. So far must be clear to every one, and it will justify further inquiry in regard to it.

(2.) When the opinions of the learned and critical are consulted, the entire weight of evidence is in favor of the new translation. The inquirer may not have the necessary books, and we will suppose he calls upon his minister and asks the privilege of examining his library, a privilege which any good minister would be happy to grant.

The first volume his eye falls upon is Cobbin's Bible, and turning to the text, he finds it rendered, "so that the times of refreshing may come." As he proceeds, he finds that the Syriac version has the new rendering. He finds that it has been adopted by Grotius, Lightfoot, and others. He consults Dr. Clarke's commentary, and finds this significant remark, "Dr. Lightfoot contends, and so ought all, that it should be translated, 'that the times of refreshing may come.'" He consults Rev. A. Barnes' notes, and finds that he endorses the new translation as a good one, and says that "the word rendered *when*, is commonly rendered *that*," which, of course, makes it read, that times of refreshing may come.

His eye now falls upon a volume, upon the back of which he reads, "The New Testament. Sawyer's Translation." He turns to the passage and reads, "That your sins may be blotted out, that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord."

Our inquirer may now be supposed to be satisfied with the new reading, but as he is about to turn away from the library, he reads on the back of a book, "The Englishman's Greek Concordance." "What is that?" to himself, "it may throw some light upon the subject." Glancing at the plan of the work, he sees that it shows

him what Greek word is represented by every English word in the New Testament, how many times and where each word occurs, and how it has been translated in each case. Let me see, what is the word on which this new translation turns? It is *when*, but the new translation renders it *that*. He turns to the word, when, in the English index, and finds more than a dozen Greek words under it, with reference to as many different pages. Which is the word in question he cannot tell. He now turns to the word, that, in the index, and finds a still larger number of Greek words that are rendered, that. He now takes the word when, and commences with each Greek word in their order; turning to the pages referred to, he examines to see in what texts each word is found. Finally he gets hold of one for which he is referred to Acts iii. 19, among many other texts. "I have got the right word at last," he says to himself. Counting the references he finds that the word rendered *when* in Acts iii. 19, is found in no less than fifty-six texts, and that in no other text is it rendered *when*, but that in forty-six, it is rendered *that*, in four *how*, and in four *to*, and in one *because*.

The inquirer is likely to be satisfied that he has found out the true sense of the original, though he cannot read a word of Greek. He also feels that it is fortunate for men of his class, that we have so good a translation of the Scriptures, that its correctness is disputed by the learned and critical in so very few instances; at least he is satisfied with the labor of settling the dispute, in his own mind, in a single case.

We have yet to consider the case of the unlearned, who cannot read, or have no books.

THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY.

That a christian ministry is of Divine appointment, and intended to be perpetual, need not be proved for the edification of our ministerial readers; but the christian ministry in its character and work, is a subject of deep and thrilling interest. It is a settled fact in the economy of the Gospel, that a living ministry is and must be the principal agency, under God, of extending reli-

gious truths, of giving moral character and tone to the community, and to its institutions, and of moulding both private and public life after a virtuous model.

The ministry was appointed by Christ to publish Gospel truth, to impress it upon the minds of men, to conform them to its claims, and to mould them in heart and life, after the Divine pattern presented in life and character of its author. The impress of the Gospel of the Son of God upon the public heart, upon the national mind, alone can save it; and this impress depends upon the character, the efficiency, and the success of the ministry.

We will not talk, at present, about the conversion of the world; we are no small portion of the world in ourselves, as a nation; we have a wide spread territory, rapidly filling up with diverse elements, gathered from almost every other nation. There is not another nation on earth so little homogeneous as ours, and where the field of conflict between truth and error, right and wrong, is so open and unrestrained. The mental elements of the nation are heterogeneous, having been educated under different political institutions, and different systems of religious faith, while conflicting foreign elements are still pouring in, as streams from hill and vale and lake and swamp, mingle their various waters, each imparting its hue to the swelling tide. Where all opinions, political, and religious, are free, as in this country, it must require some one overshadowing influence to hold such elements in political harmony, and render republican institutions stable and enduring, in the form of such a wide-spread democratic empire. What influence can do this thing? Political parties and political creeds cannot do it, for these strive with each other, and the best of them rest upon mere human authority, which cannot, of itself, take hold upon the consciences of men. We believe nothing can do it short of the prevailing influence of the religion of Jesus Christ. If the nation can be evangelized and have the Gospel of the Son of God impressed upon its heart and life, it will live, but without this, sooner or later, it will die. It is not something merely called the Gospel that will save the nation; not the Gospel all distorted and perverted. Such a Gospel has been preached, and the Southern States have had their full share of it, and under its influence treason and rebellion were nurtured, and when they

attempted to overthrow the government, the ministry lent themselves to the object with their entire influence.

The true Gospel of Christ, which requires every man to love God with all his heart, and his neighbor as himself, if impressed upon the hearts of the people, will save the nation. But how is this Gospel to be impressed upon the mind of the nation? Various means must be employed, but a living ministry must be the principal instrumentality. It is not only Christ's appointment for this very work, but is adapted to it, as a means to the end proposed. But to succeed, the ministry must be of the right stamp, a truth-loving, self-sacrificing, fearless, and deeply devoted ministry.

The ministry has sacrificed much of its influence and power, by yielding and giving way before the tide of public and popular vice. They have allowed themselves to be so separated from the great interests of the nation, that they dared not speak of them. Political sins must not be regarded as within range of the pulpit, and upon great moral questions they were required to be silent; even the great crime of enslaving human beings was not allowed to be rebuked from the pulpit. If the nation practically goes to ruin, it will be by political sins, and if ministers must not preach against them, they can have but little to do with staying the nation's downward course. But a better day is dawning, ministers are beginning to breathe and speak more freely, and amid the perils of the nation, the upheavings of rebellion, and the earthquake shocks of war, they are likely to get waked up, and speak out for God and truth and human rights, and preach a Gospel that will be opposed to all wrong. Such a ministry is what is needed, and such a ministry alone can accomplish the end for which it exists. It moves with the power of a living character, it speaks with the authority of truth, and visibly illustrates and enforces it; and with the Divine blessing, such a ministry will mould the human mind after the law and image of God.

When the war of the great rebellion shall be closed, slavery be blotted from the land, and free soils, free men, and free speech become universal in the nation, there will be opened a wider field for the ministry than ever before, and a call for an increase of laborers, and they should be men of the right stamp. In view of

the work to be performed, the christian ministry, in this land, should be full of the knowledge of the truth, deeply spiritual, and eminently practical, and above all, must be filled with the living fire of zeal, that will not only burn in their own hearts, but kindle in the hearts of others around them.

We believe, as has been stated, that the pulpit has lost much of its influence and power for good, by allowing itself to be restrained from speaking freely on all moral questions that are vital to the well-being of individuals, communities and nations, yet we believe it has great power for good left, that it is now rising in influence, and that, if it avails itself of the opportunity which the times now furnish, it will soon come up to the true standard of a christian ministry, and overshadow the nation with a hallowing and saving influence. If we can contribute in any degree, however small, to such a result, by this and articles that may follow, we shall not have labored in vain.

SELF POSSESSION IN THE PULPIT.

An English writer classes Dr. Andrews of London, with eccentric ministers, remarking that, "He was so perfectly free from conventionalism—so wholly a child—he did not know that what he did and said was strange. It lay upon his mind—what could he do but utter it?" After these remarks the writer gives the following sample of his eccentricity, which we regard as a proof of his self-possession rather than of his eccentricity. One Sabbath morning, his sermon consisted of three heads. He proceeded happily and beautifully with the first two, but when he had finished the second, he came to a dead stand. He could not recall the third to mind. After a moment's pause, he spoke: "Now look, as I came up these pulpit stairs, I had all the parts of this sermon well written on my mind; and now I cannot call to mind this third head. Organist, strike up a symphony, or a doxology, —it will come! it will come presently." While the organ played,

he leaned over the pulpit, and when its tones ceased he resumed. "Yes, yes, I have it ; how remarkable." Here he dashed off into a dissertation upon the laws of suggestion, under the operation of which he had recovered the forgotten head. This done, he resumed the thread of his sermon, and gave them the third head, in his own inimitable and impressive manner.

THE SCRIPTURES IN THE PULPIT.

Preaching should be pre-eminently biblical. A sermon may possess all the graces of style that can adorn human composition, and yet may be truly biblical. So a pulpit discourse may be truthful, and inculcate sound moral and religious views, and yet not be scriptural in its style, and constitute only a moral essay.

The Scriptures abound with facts illustrating every principle and duty, they contain all the elements of religious instruction, they are full of the most sublime views of God, and of his government and providence ; of man, his character, duty and destiny ; and transcend in sublime and beautiful imagery.

Can any one give a clearer view of God's creative power, than in these words ? " And God said, let there be light and there was light."

Can any one more forcibly describe God's authority over the worlds of matter and mind, than in these words ? " Who stilleth the noise of the seas, the noise of the waves and the tumult of the people."

Can any one better describe God's tenderness towards the Israelites, than in these words ? " In all their affliction he was afflicted,, and the angel of his presence saved them ; in his love and in his pity he redeemed them."

This view might be extended to all subjects, the Scriptures are replete, and the preacher should feed upon them, live in them, and steep his imagination in them ; let him make their words his words, and then will he speak with the authority of God.

THE WRATH OF MAN SHALL PRAISE GOD.

"Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee, the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain."—PSALM LXXVI. 10.

This Psalm celebrates some victory which God achieved for his people over their enemies.

It may refer to the overthrow of the army of Sennacherib, under the command of Rab-shakeh.

The affirmation is so general as to comprehend all the wrath of men.

The subject must be deeply interesting to all who are contending for truth, and God, and heaven, amid the strife of tongues, war of error, and the out-bursting wrath of the enemies of God and man.

To render the matter as instructive, and impressive as possible, I will

I. STATE AND EXPLAIN WHAT I BELIEVE TO BE THE TRUE SENSE OF THE TEXT.

1. What is meant by the wrath of man?

It is the opposition of sinners to God, his truth, and his people ; all opposition to what is right.

This wrath is modified in its external forms, by the laws and spirit of the age, when and where it is developed.

It has sometimes armed itself with sword and fiery faggot, and with prisons and tortures.

Sometimes it breaks out in popular tempests of fury, as in the mobs of this country.

Sometimes it wields the tongue of slander and falsehood.

When it can command no more effective weapon, it arms itself with frowns, and sneers, and contempt.

When disarmed of all other power, it wraps itself in cold indifference, and with the breath of an iceberg, seeks to chill the truth and its advocates.

It has been known to counterfeit the livery of heaven, and seek to draw its victims from their posts of duty, and the path of truth, by the lure of its light, and the enchantment of its song.

In all these forms of development, it is no less the wrath of man, than when it appears fierce and undisguised.

2. What is to be understood by the affirmation, that the wrath of man shall praise God?

The sense is, that it shall be so overruled by God, as to advance his cause; develop his goodness, wisdom and power, and promote his glory.

This has been done, and is now being accomplished, by the overruling providence of God.

We may not be able to see it clearly, and comprehend it all now, but we have some clear cases in the history of the past, and have God's word for the whole, and may trust that word.

3. What is meant by the declaration that God shall restrain the remainder of wrath?

To restrain, is to check, to repress, to hold back.

The remainder of wrath, denotes any excess of wrath, beyond what, in the circumstances, can be made to praise God.

The sense is, that God will allow only so much wrath to transpire, as he can overrule for his own praise and glory.

4. We have no occasion to trouble ourselves about the manner in which God does this; it is enough to know that it is done in such a way as to secure his own praise, and the good of the moral universe.

The transactions, on his part, must be in harmony with his own eternal wisdom, justice and goodness.

It must, of course, be done without subverting or violating man's moral agency, or infringing the freedom of his will.

God, whose perfect wisdom comprehends all causes, all contingencies, all motives and springs of action, that move all created minds, can do all this.

Such a God can so arrange events and motives along the path of the most malignant sinners, as to restrain their wrath, defeat their designs, and secure his own glory, without infringing upon human freedom, or assuming the responsibility of the acts and designs of wicked men.

II. I WILL ATTEMPT FURTHER TO ILLUSTRATE AND CONFIRM THE SENSE WHICH I HAVE GIVEN OF THE TEXT, BY FACTS RECORDED UPON THE RECORD OF THE DIVINE ADMINISTRATION.

I can notice only a few of the leading facts.

1. The case of Joseph and his brethren is clear and undeniable.

Joseph's brethren hated him wickedly, and at first proposed to kill him, but finally sold him.

They designed no good to Joseph, no good to their father, nor to the cause of God and humanity.

But God overruled it for his glory and the good of all.

Note, they had it in their hearts to kill him, but God restrained that portion of their wrath, and suffered only so much to transpire as he could, in the circumstances, overrule for good.

2. The oppression of the children of Israel in Egypt, by Pharaoh, is another very clear illustration.

The education of Moses, resulted from one of the most wicked and oppressive acts.

The general oppression prepared the Israelites to leave their homes, and to enter upon a wilderness journey, in search of a land they had never seen.

3. The wrath of Haman should not be overlooked in this relation.

He was hung upon the gallows he had prepared for another, and an honest man.

4. The conspiracy of the nobles against Daniel is a very remarkable case.

It resulted in the impression of the name of God upon an almost world-wide empire.

5. The wicked conspiracy against Christ, which resulted in his crucifixion, is the most glorious of all the illustrations.

There was never manifested a greater degree of malice, hatred, and wrath.

No other event ever resulted in so great glory to God, and so great good to man.

III. LET ME ATTEMPT TO MAKE SUCH A PRACTICAL APPLICATION, AS SHALL RENDER THE SUBJECT PERSONALLY AVAILABLE AND USEFUL TO US ALL.

1. The subject reveals the ground upon which we can rest satisfied, and feel reconciled and secure under all the dispensations of divine Providence.

It is enough to know that the very wrath of the enemies of God and man, shall result in the triumph of his cause and promote his glory.

Can any truly subdued and pious heart desire more than this ?

If a soul cannot rest satisfied and feel reconciled here, it must be because there is rebellion in the heart to God, or because the soul is not so instructed in this doctrine as to comprehend it, and rest upon it.

The cases which have been cited from the record of the divine administration, must assure us that the light of eternity will show the same to be true of every event, however dark and mysterious they may now appear.

When the mystery connected with our pilgrimage shall be solved, and the mind shall stand unclouded in the light of heaven, it will look to the once shadowy scenes of earth, and of the support this doctrine yielded, will say,

“ So comforted and so sustained.
With dark events I strove,
But found, when rightly understood,
All messengers of love.”

2. The duty most visible upon the face of the subject, is the committal of our all to God, in the use of means, assured of final success.

No matter what the external surroundings may be, what the chances for success or failure to merely human vision ; if we have no end in view beyond the accomplishment of the will of God, and the triumph of his cause, and the development of his glory, and if we apply the means which he has appointed, there can be no final failure, our final success is sure, for God is sure.

It may require an effort for christians of weak faith to get this position, but when it is once gained it is a strong hold.

It will give strength, and support, and joy, in the day of labor and toil.

It will give us courage in the face of foes and danger.

It will give us patience and fortitude in the day of persecution and suffering.

It will give us hope when every human prospect proclaims a failure.

3. This subject reveals the absolute hopelessness of those who oppose God, and fight against his truth and cause.

They are sure to be defeated in the end.

Sinners have often thought they were doing a great business, and that success was sure.

The sons of Jacob thought they had disposed of their dreaming brother.

They expected to hear no more from him, but he turned up again at a time and place they little thought of.

Pharaoh drove the Israelites in between the mountains, with the Red Sea before, and supposed his only remaining work was to dispatch them.

The enemies of Christ thought they had triumphed, when they had extorted his sentence from Pilate.

But while sinners fail to overthrow the cause of God, they involved themselves in the guilt of doing it.

Their guilt is measured by their motives and intentions.

They aim at defeating God, and at the overthrow of his government.

The fact that God overrules their counsel, and causes their wrath to praise him, will not relieve their sense of guilt and shame, when they shall look back upon their folly and defeat.

Sinners will see things in a different point of light, when they shall find themselves defeated, overthrown, and ruined.

When they shall see the cause entirely successful, upon which they spent their wrath, and upon which they dashed and were broken, and shall hear the triumph sung by all the redeemed and holy, things will be greatly changed in their view.

Their own overthrow, their despair, and their every pang and wail, will swell the general triumph, and develop the justice, wisdom, power, and grace of God, and make his praise universal.

4. The view which has been taken of the overruling Providence of God, appears to be the only tenable ground, between the two extremes, one of which would convert man into a machine, and the other would allow God little or no part in the government of the world.

It runs clear of every rational objection.

It holds men entirely accountable for their actions ; it leaves sinners just as free in the development of their wrath, as are the pious, in their obedience, prayers and songs, and neither are restrained in their volitions.

The doctrine secures the highest and final interest of all the pious.

Less than this doctrine could not do it.

If our Heavenly Father be defeated in one of his gracious purposes toward us, he may in others.

It is here, and here alone, that we can feel safe, and can say amid strife, and the upheavings of society around us, "God is my refuge and strength, I shall not be moved, neither will I be afraid,"

"For death and hell can do no more
Than what my Father please."

This doctrine secures God's ultimate triumph, and nothing less than his could do it.

If the wickedness of the wicked, in their course of depravity, self-destruction, and eternal damnation, was not made to praise God, a measure of his glory would remain unfilled, and his designs and purposes would be in part defeated.

But when the judgment of the last day shall reveal the destiny of all, and heaven shall celebrate the triumphs of grace in all the saved, and hell shall reveal the slighted grace and long-suffering of God, and the final stroke of his justice in all the lost, the measure of his glory will be full, and the intelligent universe, with one voice, will proclaim the fact, that Jehovah has triumphed.

ETERNAL LIFE GIVEN IN CHRIST.

"And this is the record, that God hath given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son."—1 JOHN v. 11.

The apostle opens this chapter in language which implies that our salvation depends upon our faith in Christ.

"Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God." Verse 1.

"For whosoever is born of God overcometh the world; and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." Verse 4.

"Who is he that overcometh the world but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?" Verse 5.

This position rendered it necessary to prove that Jesus was the Son of God.

"There are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, the water, and the blood, and these three agree in one." Verse 8.

"If we receive the witness of men the witness of God is greater; and this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son." Verse 9.

Then we have a statement of the principal fact witnessed to, namely,

"And this is the record, that God hath given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son."

Let us inquire,

I. Into the nature of this precious gift of God, eternal life, and

II. Into the medium of this gift, his Son, through whom it is communicated.

I. THE PRECIOUS GIFT OF GOD IS ETERNAL LIFE.

What then is that eternal life which is given us in Christ?

1. Eternal life is more than eternal being.

Sinners are said to be dead in sin, and if they were continued in being forever in this state, it would not constitute eternal life in a gospel sense.

It is spiritual life of which the text affirms, hence it may be lost, without the loss of existence.

It is opposed to spiritual or moral death in sin.

"He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son hath not life." Verse 12.

This proves that living men may be destitute of that life which is given us in Christ.

As the life is in Christ, those who have Christ, have the life, and those who have not Christ, have not the life.

It is what we may have or not have, without affecting our existence.

This eternal life includes three things,

(1.) Holiness, the life of God in the soul.

(2.) The glorious resurrection of the body.

(3.) Eternal blessedness in heaven at God's right hand.

2. This eternal life is the gift of God.

God only hath immortality in himself, and he is the source of all existence.

Eternal life is his special gift, not a natural endowment.

All are destitute of this life by nature, it must therefore be received as a gift from God.

No man can purchase it, by any price within his power.

3. This eternal life is freely given to all men in Christ.

I do not say all will ever enjoy this gift, but only that it is given to all in Christ.

The gift of God was to the whole world.

"God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him might not perish, but have everlasting life." John iii. 16.

Christ "gave himself a ransom for all." 1. Tim. ii. 6.

He "was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man." Heb. ii. 9.

There is life in Christ sufficient to save the whole world, if all would come to him for salvation.

No one ever did or ever can fail of eternal life, because there is no life in Christ for him.

If any fail of eternal life, it will be because they do not properly apply for it.

II. LET US CONSIDER THE MEDIUM THROUGH WHICH THIS ETERNAL LIFE IS GIVEN.

In what sense has God given us eternal life in Christ?

1. God has given us eternal life in his Son, elementally.

Christ possesses life in his own elemental nature.

"In him was life." John i. 4.

"For as the Father hath life in himself, even so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself." John v. 26.

This qualifies him to be the medium of life between the living Father and dead sinners.

The Father could make no deposit of life in him for dead sinners, were not life elemental in him.

No man or angel has life, only for himself.

2. God has given us life in his Son, as our atoning sacrifice for sin.

The death of Christ was clearly, in the divine mind, necessary, to render the communication of life to dead sinners, consistent with the demands of justice, and the honor of the divine government.

To have saved sinners without the death of Christ would have subverted the Government of God.

The fact that he died for sinners to save them is clearly affirmed.

"I lay down my life for the sheep." John x. 15.

"In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sin." Col. i. 14.

"Who his own self bear our sins in his own body on the tree, by whose stripes ye are healed." 1 Peter ii. 24, 25.

3. God has given us eternal life in his Son officially as Messiah, appointed by God, and sent into the world to redeem it.

As Messiah and Mediator, Jesus is crowned and reigns, and has the destiny of the world committed to him.

He said, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." Matt. xxviii. 18.

This comprehends the government of both worlds.

"For as the Father raiseth up the dead and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will. For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son." John v. 21, 22.

"Thou hast given him the power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him." John xvii. 2.

4. This eternal life, given us in Christ, is transferable to us, only upon the draft of faith.

The deposit of life is made in Christ for all, but those only obtain it who come to him by faith. It can be drawn only by faith.

"Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life." John v. 40.

"He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life, and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life." John iii. 36.

This life in Christ is like a treasure on deposit in a bank.

A beggar has a fortune freely given him by his friend; it is left in bank, subject to his draft.

If he does not believe it, what good will it do him?

If he does believe it, but does not draw for it, will it feed and clothe him?

He is shown the record of the will, and learns the conditions are, that he must draw for the amount within a specified period, or he will be precluded, and still he neglects it and dies a beggar as he lived.

More unwise than such a beggar, is every one who neglects the offer of eternal life so freely given in Christ.

REMARKS.

1. How important is the gospel record to every one of us?

It is the record of eternal life given to us in Christ.

How vast the interest involved, beyond all comparison?

No other record is of any value compared with this.

The records of the county, of the State, of the nation, are nothing compared with the record of the gift of eternal life in Christ.

What a crime do those commit who seek to destroy this record or to withhold it from mankind?

Some seek to destroy all confidence in it.

Some have burned up copies of it.

Some withhold it with design and with force, from their fellow immortals.

2. With what attention and solicitude should we read it and hear it preached?

Our Saviour said to the Jews, "search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life."

They are the record of God's gift of eternal life, and yet how little interest many feel in them?

How careful are you to understand your title to earthly possessions?

A serious doubt of the validity of the title to your farm would cause you sleepless nights, and yet eternal life is left uncared for, and the record lies unexamined.

3. What earnestness should we manifest in efforts to secure this great gift?

The magnitude of the object should awaken our zeal.

How indifferent many appear who profess faith in Christ?

How many sinners up to this hour, have left this great interest unlooked after and uncared for?

BACKSLIDING ADMONISHED.

"Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die : for I have not found thy works perfect before God."—REV. III. 2.

We may wonder that the apostolic churches, so soon departed from primitive simplicity and purity.

It is only a development of human weakness, and the corrupting influence of the world.

We see the same all around us, and feel it in ourselves.

Why not wonder at our own repeated backslidings ?

These fearful accounts have been written to admonish us.

To draw practical wisdom from the subject, let us consider,

I. THE STATE OF THINGS DESCRIBED.

It is a description of a deeply fallen church.

1. They had fallen, so that they were not what they had been.

The expression, "strengthen the things that remain," implies that much, if not most, was already lost.

This fall presented itself in two aspects.

In the total fall of numbers of members, while others remained true and faithful.

Also in the partial backsliding of many of the members.

2. They were so far fallen that what remained was ready to die.

This is a position occupied by every church, and every individual, before total apostasy.

It may be the state of this church to-day.

It may be the state of some individual members to-day.

It is a fearful position.

3. The same general truth is asserted directly.

"I have not found thy works perfect before God."

They did not do all that God required.

What they did was not perfect in itself.

The expression "before God," appears to imply that it was heart work that was wanting.

Their works may have appeared well before men.

4. There was some goodness, some piety yet remaining in that fallen church.

The expression, "the things that remain," proves that some virtue, that some degree of the elements of Christianity was still found among them.

They may have maintained the form of religion.

They may have kept within the limits of a moral life.

It is affirmed directly that there were some who had not defiled their garments.

These facts rendered their case still hopeful.

II. THE REMEDY POINTED OUT.

Two directions only are given.

These, if attended to, will bring such a fallen party back, be it a church or an individual:

1. Be watchful.

The supposition is that they fell for want of watchfulness.

The first act of watchfulness, is to learn one's own condition.

Wake up to your condition.

Keep awake and not let the enemy steal in upon you unobserved.

Watch against every foe.

Watch against a further fall.

To become watchful is the first measure towards a recovery.

2. Strengthen the things that remain.

These may be, good desires.

Belief in and some regard for the truth.

Some degree of attention to religious duties.

Some small degree of enjoyment.

Strengthen them by cultivating them.

Begin to work ; do every duty.

Pray more, and you will grow stronger in every virtue.

To strengthen what remains, is the only way to get back what we have lost.

REMARKS.

1. How far is this subject true of this church, or of any of its members ?

Compare present times with past. Present experience with past.

Are we rising or falling ?

2. It may soon be too late to recover.

A church may be scattered in a day.

An individual may pass in a day beyond the reach of reform.

Begin at once to make sure work for eternity.

THE CHRISTIAN'S CONFIDENCE.

“Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward.”—HEB. x. 35.

Confidence is trust or reliance, amounting to an assurance of mind, or a firm belief in the integrity, stability, and capacity of another.

Confidence may also relate to facts and principles.

Confidence is sometimes used to denote boldness or courage.

In the text it denotes both trust and courage.

The Christian's confidence or trust in God, and in the truth and saving power of the gospel, makes him bold.

It made the martyrs bold in the face of death.

It is confidence, this trust, this assurance of the integrity of God, and the truth and saving power of the gospel, that the apostle exhorts us not to cast away.

In order to this confidence, there must be clear views of the fundamental truths upon which our hope rests, otherwise our confidence would be blind.

It is not every truth that is fundamental to a saving confidence, yet some truths are fundamental.

It therefore becomes necessary to fix our attention upon those fundamental points, in regard to which our confidence must be maintained.

I. Cast not away your confidence in God, as the great author and preserver of your being, as the source of all your blessings, and as an all-wise and good moral governor, exercising a universal Providence.

Confidence in God includes two fundamental points.

1. The views we entertain of God are fundamental to a well grounded confidence.

Our confidence in God will be in proportion to the correctness and clearness of our views of his character, other things being equal.

Know then, that God is eternal, omni-potent, omni-present, all-wise, just, good and gracious.

This view of the divine character is the only rock upon which our confidence can repose, and here it may repose in every trial and every storm.

No partial evils, no mysterious dispensations of Providence, no storms and moral convulsions must be allowed to shake us from this safe anchorage ground of our hope.

2. The views we entertain of ourselves, in our relations to God, are fundamental to our confidence.

There may be a very clear orthodox head, connected with a guilty conscience and a fearful heart.

Confidence can exist only where there is a knowledge of pardon, and a consciousness of acceptance with God.

Guilty, unpardoned sinners cannot have confidence in God, in the full sense of the text.

They are afraid of God, with that fear which hath torment.

Confidence supposes a realization of the text which says,

"The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God." Rom. viii. 16.

This confidence in God, resting first upon correct views of the divine character, and secondly, upon a knowledge of our own acceptance with God, as pardoned sinners, must never be cast away.

It is the christian's light and life and power.

II. Cast not away your confidence in Jesus Christ, as your only sacrifice for sin, and medium of acceptance with God.

He is the only Saviour, and there is no other.

"Neither is there salvation in any other : for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." Acts iv. 12.

"I am the way, the truth and the life : no man cometh unto the Father but by me." John xiv. 6.

"To him gave all the prophets witness, that through his name, whosoever believeth in him shall receive the remission of sins." Acts x. 43.

It is then clear that there is no access to God, no pardon and acceptance, except in and through Christ, who is our "advocate with the Father."

Our only confidence is in his blood.

We must never cast away our confidence in the atonement made by the one offering of himself for all.

Let go your hold upon this ground of confidence, trust in anything else for one moment, and the darkness of despair will gather upon your prospects, and the frost of moral death will seize upon your vitals.

We must feel the truth of the words of the poet,

"Could my tears forever flow,
Could my zeal no languor know,
This for sin could not atone,
Thou must save, and thou alone ;
In my hand no price I bring,
Simply to thy cross I cling."

III. Cast not away your confidence in the Holy Spirit, as the executive power of the gospel, and as the great reprover, comforter and sanctifier.

Without the direct influence of the Spirit, truth itself will fail to subdue hard and depraved hearts.

The Spirit is likely to work in and by us, according to our faith, according to our confidence in its agency and operations.

If we expected more of its power, we should feel and see more of it.

Some have no confidence in the influence of the Spirit ; they make their religion an exclusive matter of the intellect.

Such a religion may be light, but it must be as cold as winter sunbeams glowing upon fields of ice and snow.

We may well pray,

"Come Holy Ghost our hearts inspire,
Let us thine influence prove :
Source of the old prophetic fire,
Fountain of life and love.

"Come Holy Spirit heavenly Dove,
 With all thy quick'ning power ;
 Kindle a flame of sacred love
 In these cold hearts of ours."

IV. Cast not away your confidence in the Scriptures, as a revelation of the will of God, and our only authoritative rule of faith and practice.

If the Scriptures are not a rule of faith and practice, we have none.

Darkness always has brooded, and still broods, where the Scriptures do not shine.

Where they have been known, they have always been the guide and the solace of the pious, and they have never misled, or failed to support those who have trusted them.

If you cast away your confidence in them, upon what will you take hold ?

If sceptical guides would lead you off from your confidence in the Scriptures, hold them "to the law and the testimony : if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." Isa. viii. 20.

V. Cast not away your confidence in the church of Christ, as a divinely appointed and abiding gospel institution.

Religious organizations, called churches, often become corrupt, and cease to be churches of Christ, but this does not destroy the validity of church organization, or annul the duty of belonging to, and maintaining a true church of Christ.

We are not to cast away our confidence in church organizations, because some have done wrong.

The gospel commands, and our social nature needs church association and fellowship, and those who have abandoned them, have generally made shipwreck of their souls.

Venture not alone, in human weakness and amid dangers.

VI. Cast not away your confidence in the promises and hope of heaven, as your future and eternal home.

We are strangers and pilgrims on earth.

This is not our rest. Abraham confessed that he was a stranger and a pilgrim on the earth, and "looked for a city which hath foundation whose builder and maker is God."

So let us continue to look for that city.

In the day of trial, renew your promises and vows, and your confidence in heaven as your home and rest, and look upward with desire.

In the day of toil and burdens, remember that life is short, and that your rest is near.

When your thoughts still cling to the mould'ring past,
And the hopes of youth fall thick in the blast,

And the day is cold, and dark and dreary, then renew your confidence in the hope of heaven.

THE MINISTRATIONS OF ANGELS.

"Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?"—HEB. I. 14.

Angels are only incidentally alluded to, for the purpose of illustrating other important matters more directly connected with human duty and destiny.

The object here is to prove the dignity of the Son of God.

The Son sits at God's right hand, while angels are sent forth to minister to his earthly children, them who shall be heirs of salvation.

There is much obscurity about some aspects of the subject, yet two facts are placed beyond doubt, and to these I will direct attention.

I. THERE IS AN ORDER OF CREATED BEINGS CALLED ANGELS, SUPERIOR TO MEN.

I propose to note three leading facts in regard to angels, as a class of intelligent beings.

1. Angels are spiritual beings, and not material and corporeal.

This renders them invisible and intangible to our material organisms, or to our minds which act through a material organism.

It is true that angels have been seen and felt, but these few cases are to be regarded miracles.

This may be effected by their assuming a body for the special purpose, or by a suspension of the laws of our material natures.

2. Angels are very numerous.

"The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels." Psalm lxxviii. 17.

"I can now pray the Father, and he shall presently send me twelve legions of angels." Matt. xxvi. 58.

Paul speaks of "an innumerable company of angels." Heb. xii. 22.

John "heard the voice of ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands." Rev. v. 11.

3. Angels are very powerful to execute the divine commands.

"Bless the Lord, ye his angels, which excel in strength." Psal. ciii. 20.

One angel, with the fell sweep of his arm, slew one hundred and seventy thousand Israelites, from Dan to Beer-sheba. 2 Sam. xxiv. 15, 16.

One angel slew one hundred and eighty-five thousand men, in one night, in the Assyrian camp. Isa. xxxvii. 37.

II. ANGELS, IN SOME WAY MINISTER TO THE CHILDREN OF GOD ON EARTH.

The fact is affirmed beyond a doubt.

"Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?"

The text has the force of an affirmation, that they are all ministering spirits.

By "them who shall be heirs of salvation," christians are meant, here in this life, before they reach heaven.

It may include angelic efforts to reclaim sinners.

"Shall be heirs," denotes such as shall finally inherit heaven while it implies that they have not gained it, that they are prospective heirs.

The fact affirmed in the text, that angels are ministering spirits, is illustrated by a number of special cases recorded.

Angels were stationed, as a guard, to keep the way of the tree of life.

Angels were sent to Abraham with whom he communed.

Two were sent to Sodom, who hastened Lot out of the city.

An angel was sent to lodge with Daniel in the lion's den.

The angel Gabriel was sent to Zacharius.

The same angel was sent to Mary the mother of Jesus.

An angel was sent to the shepherds to announce the Saviour's birth.*

Angels ministered to Christ in his temptation in the wilderness, and strengthened him in the garden of agony.

An angel opened the prison door and brought the apostles out. Acts v. 19.

An angel released Peter from prison. Acts xii. 7, 8.

An angel stood by Paul, on ship-board, when the storm was loud and the night was dark, and the ocean yawned, and rudely blowed the wind that tossed the foundering bark. Acts xxvi. 23.

There are other cases recorded, but the above are sufficient.

It is then clear that angels are employed as ministering spirits in the affairs of men.

All christians are doubtless the subjects of angelic ministrations, and they may move sinners to reform.

However mysterious the subject may be, the cases already cited prove it possible.

Nor does it follow that God has ceased to employ angels, because we do not see them as they were seen in old times.

As well might we suppose that God has ceased to govern the world, because we do not hear his voice, and see his hand as in days of old.

That was an age of miracles which long since passed away, but God still concerns himself in the affairs of men, and may employ angels in attending to them.

Angels may so act upon our minds that we do not realize their presence, and do not distinguish between the thoughts they suggest, and those which arise spontaneously in the mind without external influence.

Christians generally believe that devils exert an evil influence upon the minds of men, and it is as reasonable to suppose that angels may exert a good influence.

But what do angels do for us ?

1. They may defend us from seen and unseen dangers.

"The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them."

2. Angels may strengthen us to resist temptation.

Angels ministered to Christ and supported him in his temptation and suffering.

If devils, or evil angels tempt us, why may not good angels support us?

3. Angels may act as guides on life's journey.

Wily foes beset our path to turn us aside from the right way.

Good angels may stand at the corners of these by-ways into which our foes would lead us.

God promised to send an angel to guide the Israelites to the promised land.

It is also written in general, "He shall give his angels charge over thee to keep thee in all thy ways." Psal. xci. 11.

4. Angels may support us in affliction.

When Christ was taken up from his disciples, angels appeared and comforted them. Acts i. 11.

An angel comforted Daniel in his affliction. Dan. x. 10-21.

They may impart comfort by suggesting consoling thoughts and consoling promises.

5. Angels may attend dying sinners, and conduct their souls to their home in the spirit world.

Lazarus died and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom. Luke xvi. 28.

Some modern christians have been so spiritualized as to realize the presence of angels in the dying hour.

REMARKS

1. The doctrine of the ministration of angels being established, it is reasonable to believe that their power to do us good is in proportion to our holiness.

If we were more holy and spiritually minded, doubtless angels could take a stronger hold upon us.

Their ministrations supposes a constant conflict with evil spirits.

The power of the one and the other rises and falls, as we incline to one side or the other.

2. The subject is capable of a practical application, and should exert a constant and controlling influence over our minds and conduct.

It is worthy of deep reflection—are we really attended by unseen angelic guardians?

Think of the strife waged between our spiritual friends and foes; the one party to save us, the other to ruin us.

Think how evil spirits triumph, and how good angels droop their wings, when we turn away from the right path.

Think again, how the good angels triumph when they win us to virtue's path.

They may be present now to witness the result of this discourse upon the subject of their own ministrations.

Shall those guardian angels be grieved by our disregard of truth and right?

EVERY MAN HIS OWN BIOGRAPHER.

BY REV. C. STOKES.

“What I have written I have written.”—JOHN XIX. 22.

This was Pilate's reply to the chief priests of the Jews, concerning the title that he wrote upon the cross of Christ.

Some writers have supposed that Pilate was unwilling to change the inscription or title that he wrote, because as Judge, he was unwilling to acknowledge an error in his judgment.

Others suppose that Pilate believed him to be the Christ the Son of God, and that the title was correct and needed no correction.

The title was written in Hebrew, and Greek, and Latin.

These three nations were at that time the representatives of the world, and were to be the instruments of spreading the Gospel over the whole world.

The fountain of the national life of the Jews, gushed forth and

flowed on in their appointed channels, at the command of God, by the call of Abraham, when but one family was chosen to keep and hand down the deposits of divine truth to the world.

But the time had now come when it should be aided by the cultivated imagination of the Greeks, and all the philosophy of Greece should be brought to the furtherance of the Gospel.

The Latin text no doubt predicted that the Gospel should be backed up by the organization and polity of the Romans, that it should be nourished and supported by their strong national power.

Christianity first set forth and taught in the schools of Judea under Gospel influence is like that of the sun, spreading its luminous light in almost every language, and is permeating the nations of the earth.

In making use of the text,

I. We shall compare life to a journal, every man his own scribe.

1. In this book, or journal of life, there are its many pages and columns in which something is inscribed.

In this book there are no blank pages, as the day is spent, so it will stand upon the journal of life for ever.

Man as a historian, is not like the mariner that ploughs the ocean and only leaves his mark a few yards behind his vessel's keel, obliterated by the first wave.

Nor like the traveller across the sand, the first shower or breeze blots out his foot-prints for ever.

But like the navigator who runs his line, sounds his depth, and takes his reckoning, and leaves to posterity the advantages and dangers of the pathway.

Or like the engineer that surveys the land, strikes his line, leaves his mark for coming posterity.

2. The volume of life which we are filling up will stand for ever.

One eminent painter, as he was seen slowly striking with his pencil, and gently touching with his brush, was asked why he painted so slowly; he remarked, "I am painting for all time, it becomes me to paint carefully."

But we are inscribing on the pages of life's history, to stand not only for all time, but to all eternity.

In this volume will be written all the doings and sayings of life, thoughts and desires, which have been cherished or suppressed, religious influences, whether improved or neglected.

3. In the vast library of eternity, what a contrast there will be.

From the massive volume of Methuselah of nine hundred and sixty-nine years, or pages, to the small book of a few years, or pages.

But it will be their moral and religious tone, that will stamp their worth and fix their destiny.

There may be a series of moral and spiritual daguerotypes drawn from every intelligent creature, by as fixed a necessity as the physical arrangement by which the sun draws the picture of the face upon the plate.

And as the picture passes through the process to its completion, so with these moral and spiritual daguerotypes, it takes the whole of life to stamp their character.

A painter once caught sight of a little child on his knees, his hands clasped, his eyes and heart uplifted to God in earnest prayer, this beautiful scene was soon transferred to his canvass. He went in search for its opposite. In a prison cell he found a condemned criminal, with almost every lineament of the divine or the human obliterated, this he sketched as the contrast to hang side by side the other.

But who can describe the contrast that there will be, when all moral characters shall stand before the great white throne of God.

There will be every color and shade of moral being, there will be the heathen without law, by the light of instinct and of conscience, became a law unto himself, through the darkness that encircled around him, he has palpably found his way to God ; while many with the light and glory of the Gospel shining around them, have made their own destruction sure.

It will be the language of every man then, "What I have written I have written."

II. There are three books in which we are writing.

1. In the book of our own minds.

Whatever is written there will stand for ever.

It is true, the memory becomes dim by the infirmities of age and disease ; but oh ! when this dull mortality shall be laid aside, and the mind reinvigorated, the whole life will appear in its own character.

2. In the book, or minds of others.

"For none of us liveth unto himself, and no man dieth to himself."

We are creatures of influence, the influence we set in motion will never stop ; like the pebble cast into the sea, though small, its influence is felt from shore to shore.

With regard to my influence upon others, I may say, "What I have written I have written."

3. In the book of God's remembrance.

Whatsoever is written there can never be erased.

There is no undoing, morally speaking, what has been done ; a man may wrong his neighbor and confess it, but he cannot undo the wrong.

In this respect Esau found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears. That is he could not undo what he had done in selling his birthright.

A sinner may repent of his sins and be forgiven, may have pardon sealed home to his heart by the precious blood and spirit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and have the love of God shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost given unto him, but can never undo what he has done.

It will be Paul's experience forever. Though,

"I the chief of sinners am,
But Jesus died for me."

Is the biographer careful to meet the scrutiny of the inspector, and receive his approval ?

Remember that the volume you are filling up, must stand approved or disapproved by the righteous Judge of all the earth.

III. These volumes of moral character will remain unchanged for ever.

1. The bible reveals no process through which men shall pass and be purified from their sins in the world to come.

"But him that is unjust let him be unjust still."

2. It teaches no annihilation. But the bible teaches that man's

soul is immortal, and the body shall be raised immortal, those that have done good to everlasting life, and those that have done evil to everlasting shame and contempt.

3. The explorer, as he goes in search among the ruins of the past, it may be of Athens, Ninevah, or Babylon, he brings back rich specimens of Egyptian or Grecian art, these are stored up as rare relics of past ages.

The geologist descends into the bowels of the earth, and as he carefully examines its vast pages folded together, from its lowest strata he brings up the fossil remains of plants and trees, that grew in untold ages past.

From another strata he brings up the fossil remains of fishes, birds and reptiles, from another layer he brings up remains of mammoth beasts, &c.

From these discoveries we trace upon the sands of time the foot-prints of what has lived in the past.

These relics of the past are stored up in our museums, as specimens of wonder and curiosity. These all point us back over the past, to cities of old, and to the world in untold ages past.

But when this world shall cease to roll on its orbit, and all nature be convulsed—time brought to a close, moral character will remain, these will be gathered up as the relics of a ruined world.

“Lives of great men all remind us,
We may make our lives sublime,
And, departing, leave behind us
Foot-prints on the sands of time.

Foot-prints that perhaps another,
Sailing o’er life’s solemn main,
A forlorn and shipwreck’d brother
Seeing, may take heart again.”

WAREHAM, MASS., March 1864.

JESUS AN EXAMPLE OF PERSEVERANCE.

“Who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.”—HEB. xii. 2.

The apostle having exhorted us to run the Christian race, presents the example of Christ to strengthen our faith and courage.

I. Let us consider what the Saviour endured.

His life was a life of sorrow. From the manger to the cross he was called "a man of sorrows."

He endured the contradiction of sinners against himself. They despised his authority. "There came to him the chief priests, and the scribes and elders, and say unto him, By what authority doest thou these things?" Mark xi. 27, 28.

They ascribed his miracles to the devil. "He casteth out devils, through the prince of the devils." Matt. ix. 34.

They denied his divine nature. "For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy, and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God." John x. 33.

He endured the reproaches of men. He was accused of being a mover of sedition, a ringleader of the Nazarenes, one that had a devil, and as such he was derided, insulted, and despised.

He endured terrible agony in the garden, when his "sweat was, as it were, great drops of blood falling down to the ground.

And last of all, he endured the ignominious death of the cross. He was numbered with the vilest malefactors, and he endured the cross despising the shame, leaving us an example that we should walk in his steps.

II. Let us consider what sustained him in these terrible sufferings. "Who for the joy that was set before him."

1. In that he could satisfy the claims of public justice, and thereby give stability to the government of God, which, as a moral government, requires penal sanctions to its laws. Christ satisfied this penal claim for us, "That he (God) might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.

2. By his sufferings he would open the way of salvation to a guilty world, so that we may now say, that

"The happy gates of gospel grace
Stand open night and day."

3. He would bring many souls to eternal glory. What joy amid his sufferings he must have felt, when he contemplated the glorious results.

III. The reward of his sufferings. "Set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

The right hand is a place of dignity and honor, so Christ as mediator is exalted to the greatest dignity and honor in heaven. "Far above all principality and power and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come." Eph. i. 21.

We should set Jesus before our minds in his humiliation as an example of patience and perseverance, and be encouraged to endure hardness as good soldiers, by considering the glorious results.—*Morning Star*.

THE PREACHER THAT CONVERTS THE SOUL.

"I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me." John xii. 32. Other preaching may please, amuse and entertain; but the love of Christ attracts, astonishes, draws, breaks, melts, subdues and changes the heart. St. Paul knew this, and determined to preach "Jesus Christ and him crucified."

In the light of his dying Saviour's cross, the sinner sees and feels "the exceeding sinfulness of sin," the height and depth of the love of Christ.

There, and only there, he beholds his sin atoned for, his guilt cancelled, the law magnified, justice satisfied, God glorified—"just in justifying the ungodly who believe in Jesus." There he is conquered, disarmed, won by the love of Christ. In a moment the prayer of faith ascends, the tears of penitence fall, regeneration of heart is effected, consecration of himself to God is made: "I am the Lord's"—he becomes "a new creature in Christ Jesus."

What made the preaching of Waugh and Hill, and Burder and Whitefield, and Wesley so efficient to the conversion of souls, but that the love of Christ was the burden of their theme? They glorified Christ in their preaching, and the Holy Spirit glorified their preaching in the conversion of multitudes now with them "before the throne of God and the Lamb."

BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION.

INTERPRETATION OF THE SCRIPTURES AS A TRANSLATION.

In this concluding article on the Interpretation of the Scriptures as a Translation, we have to deal with the unlearned. Of these some may be able to read the Scriptures in their own language, and others may not be able to read. How are such to know that the Scriptures they read are a faithful translation of the original Hebrew and Greek?

1. They may know it in the same way and with the same degree of certainty, that they know anything else which they cannot demonstrate for himself. A neighbor calls upon me, and makes complicated statements in regard to money matters, receipts, disbursements, and interests are all to be taken into the account, and he requests me to tell him how the matter now stands. I take his statements and proceed, and in a short time I tell him where the balance lies, and its exact amount to the fraction of a cent. He goes away satisfied that he has got the truth of the matter, though he understands no more about the process by which I reached the result, than the unlettered reader of the Scriptures knows about Hebrew and Greek. My neighbor has but just gone, when another enters, and states that Mr. S., who makes great pretensions to learning, has just told him that the Scriptures are badly and in many cases falsely translated, and that they cannot be relied upon as a rule of duty, or standard of faith. This unlearned Christian is troubled, and I sit down to comfort him. I give him a history of the translation. It was done by the most learned of the age. It was done, not by enemies of the Scriptures, but by friends, who believed them to have been given by inspiration from God, and who trusted in them for eternal life. Such men would not dare to make false translations. They, believing the Scriptures and trusting in them, were interested to keep them pure. To have translated falsely would have exposed themselves and the Scriptures too, for learned Infidels and enemies would soon have discovered the fraud, and exposed it. I tell him further, that the translation is admitted to be a good one by all the learned, who read and love the Scriptures,

and though they differ in regard to some few passages of no vital importance, they all agree that a better translation, as a whole, would not be likely to result from a new trial.

I also tell him I have consulted the most learned writers on the subject, and have myself compared many texts, and am entirely satisfied of the general correctness of the translation. Finally, I take down from my library some new translations, and read to him, that he may know for himself how very little variation there is. He now leaves satisfied that he has got the real Scripture in his own English family Bible at home, and who will say that he has not just as good reason to be satisfied with the translation, as my other neighbor has with my statement in regard to his money matters.

Infidels pretend to great concern in regard to the uncertainty of the translation of the Scriptures, while they read the translations of French Infidel writers, without dreaming that they have not got the real work of the author. The unlearned then know that they have got the genuine Scriptures, just as they know anything which they have to take upon evidence.

2. So far as those are concerned, who cannot read, they would be but little better off, if the Scriptures had been written in English, or they had learned to speak Hebrew and Greek. Not being able to read themselves, they must trust to another's reading; and were it the Hebrew itself read to them, it must depend upon the truthfulness of the reader, and a translator can be just as truthful as a reader.

themselves. Said our Saviour, "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or I shall speak of myself." It is not pretended that deep piety, deep christian experience, will settle every criticism in regard to the translation, but it will settle the truth and saving power of the translated Scriptures as a whole, and that will answer all practical purposes, which is all that unlettered men need to look for or ex-

pect. Let any man "do his will," that is, make an honest effort to live according to the Scriptures, as teaching the will of God, and he will experience such a revelation of light and saving influence in his own mind, as will leave him no doubts in regard to their truth as a whole, as he finds them in the English Bible. Learning is good, criticism is good in its place, extensive libraries are good, but all cannot have these ; yet all can know the doctrine by doing the will of God. This experiment of an honest life, moulded after the will of God, as taught in the Scriptures, will bring to the pious heart a proof that the original divinity of the Scriptures has come down to us in the translation, more satisfactory than Hebrew and Greek letters, and all the criticisms that were ever perpetrated.

BE IN EARNEST.

In attempting to enforce the necessity of earnestness upon the ministry, it is taken for granted that the ministry are or should be both intelligent and pious. Ignorance is not to be tolerated in the pulpit, while piety is indispensable to its success. It will be a dark day for Zion, when deep personal piety shall be regarded as second to any other qualification for the ministry, but we propose to insist upon earnestness. The earnestness, however, which will give success, must have strong faith and deep spirituality for its power. The preacher cannot expect to inspire in the minds of his hearers, a zeal which he does not possess himself. He who would rouse indolence, give a new impulse to activity, and inspire courage and hope ; in a word, if he would breathe his own soul into the souls of others, and light them up with the fires that burn in his own, must be in earnest. It is not enough that the minister cry to his hearers, "be in earnest," but he must himself be in earnest, to give that cry an awakening and thrilling power. Real earnestness, whatever be its object, is impressive, and commanding, which, upon its face, gives strong assurance of success.

But to feel and manifest this earnestness, the minister must appreciate the responsibilities and important object of his calling. Placing the high designs of the ministry before his mind, he must yield up his soul to the one desire of fulfilling his mission, with a surrender which knows no reserve, and with a steadiness which allows of no diversion, and with a diligence which finds no time for rest or intermission. The objects of his calling must be so uppermost in his heart, as to fill his conversation, and so entirely and constantly before his mind, as to shut off every other object from his vision. Such an earnestness possess a powerful fascination to engage the feelings of others. Such an earnestness is really contagious, the fires that inflame it and give it life, will kindle upon surrounding hearts, and it will be felt by many as a charm and an influence not to be resisted.

These remarks regard the whole deportment of the minister, in every department of his labor, but allowing such an earnestness to characterize his entire life, his pulpit efforts will constitute its focus, where it will burn and blaze with its greatest intensity, moving and melting the hearts of his hearers.

ECCENTRICITY AND PULPIT POWER.

Many of the early Methodist Preachers, both in England and America, were very noted for their pulpit power. It was not the power of refined eloquence, but an earnest, coarse, and often eccentric power, calculated to cleave rocky hearts, which softer manners would leave unbroken. Among the English preachers of this stamp was William Dawson. It is said that he spoke in thunder tones, and that the terrors of the Lord ever gleamed around the pulpit he filled. A writer says of him, that he had but two words, but that he uttered them in a wonderful variety of emphasis and cadence, "REPENT or be DAMNED."

On one occasion he took for his text, "The Lord shut him in." He commenced his sermon at the foot of the pulpit stairs. He supposed himself to be Noah, the pulpit to be the Ark which he

was building, and his hearers to be the ungodly in the time of Noah. As he explained the state of things while the Ark was building, he gradually ascended the stairs step by step, as he progressed and warmed up in his subject, until he reached the top, then, stepping into the pulpit, he slammed the door to, with a force that startled the assembly, and shouted at the top of his voice, "The Lord shut him in." Then he unchained the storm, and the flood came rolling in upon the world, lightnings flashed and thunders roared; cities, towns, forests were swept away, hills were submerged, mountain sides and rocky cliffs and crags crumbled beneath those who fled to them for safety, and the shrieking of perishing sinners mingled with the roar of the storm, while the Ark, uplifted by the billows, rode upon the face of the wide waste of angry waters.

At another time he took for his text, "Thou art weighed in the balance and found wanting." Such was his exhibition of the claims of justice, that a dishonest pedler present felt that the whole sermon was preached to him, until he lost self control, and rushed up to the pulpit and presented his measure to the preacher, exclaiming, "break it, break it, it is too short."

Such preaching is very unlike the formal studied style of the pulpit of these times. The pulpit may show as much light now as then, and may be more graceful, but it has less power.

self familiar with men and things. A man whose whole life is pent up in a state of reserve, is weakest when occasion compels him to leave it, and come in active contact with the state of things outside of his seclusion. It is only by free and open intercourse that man can be known, that one can test himself. Here it is that humanity is seen in all its weakness, and in all its strength. Those who want courage to seek truth in these rough experiences, are profoundly below all true greatness.

WALKING IN THE LIGHT.

"But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."
—1 JOHN I. 7.

The fifth verse declares that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.

The sixth verse declares that, if we say we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not the truth.

The text then asserts the benefit of walking in the light.

"If we walk in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son, cleanseth from us all sin."

Let us now consider,

I. WHAT IT IS TO WALK IN THE LIGHT.

Walking denotes living, or the progress of life, as though life were a journey.

1. Walking in the light, denotes believing the truth of the gospel.

Truth is light, and those who have and believe the truth of Christianity, walk in the light.

Those who have not the gospel, or do not believe it, walk in darkness.

2. Walking in the light, denotes obeying the gospel.

The gospel, as a light, shows us the path of duty, and to walk in that path, is to walk in the light.

Those who leave the path of duty, and walk in the path of sin, walk in darkness.

3. Walking in the light denotes the life and joy of deep Christian experience.

God is light, and Christian experience is a revelation of God in the soul.

All such walk in the light of present joy.

They also walk in the light of hope, which regards the future.

4. Walking in the light denotes fellowship and communion with God.

"This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness

at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth."

As God is light, those who have fellowship with him, must have light ; light and fellowship with God are therefore inseparable.

"As he is in the light," is an expression which denotes union with God, and likeness to God.

God is light, and shines in his own light, and those who have fellowship with him walk in that light.

Those who are like God, who bear his image, shine in and reflect the light of God.

Now let us consider,

II. THE BENEFITS OF WALKING IN THE LIGHT.

1. If we walk in the light, we have fellowship one with another.

If all walk in the same light, all will see alike, and embrace the same fundamental views, and live for the same end.

As all are like God, bearing his image, all must bear a common likeness to each other.

Fellowship ought not to depend upon the sectarian names men assume, but upon their likeness to God and each other.

As in philosophy, two things equal to a third, must be equal to each other, so two Christians, both being like God, must be like each other.

2. If we walk in the light as God is in the light, the blood of Jesus Christ his Son, cleanseth from all sin.

The blood of Christ, it being the blood of atonement, is the only and sufficient remedy for sin.

"In whom we have redemption, through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace." Eph. i. 7.

"Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood, he entered once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. For if the blood of bulls and goats, and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh ; how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your consciences from dead works to serve the living God." Heb. ix. 12-14.

"Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with cor-

ruptible things, as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, as a lamb without blemish and without spot." 1 Peter i. 18, 19.

"Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood." Rev. i. 5.

The blood of Christ is the only remedy for sin, for it is declared that "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved." Acts iv. 12.

So also is the blood of Christ a sufficient remedy for sin. "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin."

From all past sin, by removing the guilt by a free pardon.

From the pollution of sin, by the renewing and sanctifying influence of the Holy Spirit.

From all sin in kind, number and degree.

The word, "cleanseth," denotes present and continued action.

The work may go on, and deepen more and more, until we shall be fully washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb.

But few, if any of us, have yet proved the power of the blood of Christ to its fullest extent.

REMARKS.

1. In the light of this subject, we see why so few are saved.

They do not walk in the light.

All men have more or less light, but they do not follow it, and walk in it.

How very few are earnest in their inquiries after the truth, that they may obey it, and walk in it, and be guided by it?

How few use the means of knowing the truth?

Many shun the light with design, because they are unwilling to be led by it.

They will not come to hear the gospel preached, because it disturbs them in their carnal repose.

If the lamp of heaven is displayed in the pulpit, it is clear that but few walk in the light.

2. We may learn from this subject why Christians are no better.

They do not walk in the light, as he is in the light.

They do not walk in all the light they have; if they did, they

would be more thoroughly cleansed, and have more perfect fellowship one with another.

Who of us have done as well as we have known?

To obey the light, and walk in it, will increase it.

"The path of the just is as the shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." Prov. iv. 18.

HEARING AND KEEPING THE WORD OF GOD.

"Blessed are they that hear the word of God and keep it."—LUKE XI. 28.

As the Saviour was preaching, putting to silence his opposers and enemies, and pouring light upon the minds of honest inquirers after truth, a woman was so impressed with his preaching, that she lifted up her voice amid the throng, and pronounced that mother blessed that had such a son.

It might have been considered indelicate for a female to speak out with a loud voice in such an assembly, but if so, her feelings overcame her sense of propriety.

The Saviour replied to her, "Yea, rather blessed are they that hear the word of God and keep it."

He admitted the truth of her saying, but he affirmed that there is a higher blessedness still.

Let us inquire,

I. WHAT IS THE WORD OF GOD, IN OUR SAVIOUR'S SENSE?

The word of God is that which God has spoken.

God spake by Moses, the prophets, Christ himself, and his apostles.

This word is found in the Scriptures.

"Unto them were committed the oracles of God." Rom. iii. 2.

"For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." 1 Peter i. 21.

"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God." 1 Tim. iii. 16.

The word of God now comprehends all the Scriptures, and the whole gospel of our salvation.

II. WHAT IS IT TO HEAR THE WORD OF GOD?

1. Reading the Scriptures is one method of hearing the word of God.

"Search the Scriptures for in them ye think ye have eternal life."

2. Hearing the gospel preached, is another method of hearing the word of God.

It is not hearing the word of God to hear falsehood preached, but when the truth is preached, it is the word of God.

3. To hear the word of God, we must give attention to what we read and hear.

Many read, and sit under preaching without hearing.

III. WHAT IS IT TO KEEP THE WORD OF GOD?

1. We must first get the word of God, by understanding it, before we can keep it.

To purchase a Bible and lay it away, is not keeping the word of God, in the sense of the text.

2. We must believe the word of God to keep it.

Those who do not believe it, cast it away.

3. To keep the word of God, we must obey it as a rule of life, as our supreme law.

To keep a precept or law is to obey it.

"If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments." Matt. xix. 17.

"If ye love me, keep my commandments." John xiv. 15.

In these texts, keeping means obeying.

IV. IN WHAT SENSE ARE THOSE BLESSED WHO HEAR AND KEEP THE WORD OF GOD?

1. The word of God must be a rich treasure in itself, to have and keep.

It is God's richest gift to man.

It is God's own mind, the outbeaming of divinity.

2. Those who hear and keep the word of God, are blessed with a knowledge of their duty.

This, with honest people, is a great blessing.

Those who wish to neglect duty, may be glad not to know it.

3. Those who hear the word of God and keep it, are blessed

with its support and consolation, under the trials and afflictions of this life.

The experimental christian knows what a great blessing the Bible is to him.

A single text often fills the soul with light and joy.

4. Those who hear the word of God and keep it, will be blessed with its light and support in the hour of life's dark going down.

When every other trust shall fail ; when our hold upon all earthly interests shall give way, and we feel them slipping from our grasp, and fading from our eyes ; and when affectionate and weeping friends can do no more for us, the word of God, heard and kept, will be of untold value, a blessing not to be estimated.

5. Those who hear the word of God and keep it, will be blessed with the inheritance it promises.

The Scriptures contain the terms of salvation, and are God's covenant, by which he has secured to men heaven and eternal life, on condition that they will hear and keep this covenant.

REMARKS.

How wonderful it is that men are not more interested in the Bible. If a communication could be obtained from the moon, what interest would be felt in the book, and how would it be sought.

But the Bible is from God ; it is light from heaven ; it treats not of the moon, but of time and eternity ; of the land of immortality.

If a book told us how to prevent sickness and death, how would it be studied ?

But the Bible treats of eternal life.

If a book gave certain directions how to obtain gold and silver, and houses and lands, who would not search it ?

But the Bible teaches us how to gain heavenly and eternal riches.

If a book gave sure directions how to gain the highest honors of earth, how many would press it to their lips and hearts ?

But the Bible teaches us how we may gain honor and glory immortal, and a crown that will never fade.

Let me then recommend this blessed book to you as God's unspeakable gift to man.

DIVINE AND HUMAN AGENCY.

"Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling ; for it is God which worketh in you, both to will and to do of his good pleasure."—PHIL. II. 12, 13.

Men often run into one extreme under the pretence of avoiding another.

Some to escape the absurdity that men can be saved by their own works, adopt the theory that men can do nothing towards saving themselves.

Others seeing this danger, have run on the other extreme, and adopted the system of human merit.

The former are frozen up as in a morally frigid region.

The latter are broken on the wild rocks of fanaticism.

Between these two wide and equally dangerous extremes, lies the channel of truth, clear, calm and safe.

The true way to heaven is found on that line where divine and human agency meet.

We are required to work out our salvation, while God works in us to will and to do.

Let us then consider the work of God which he works within us, and how we are required to improve upon this work, by working our salvation out.

I. THE WORK OF GOD WITHIN US.

1. God works in us to will.

Man's will is depraved, so that he, being left to himself, would always will against God.

God does not work a will in man, but works in man to cause him to will for himself.

This he does by the influence of truth and the Spirit.

The motives arising from the presentation of truth applied by the Spirit, may be summed up as follows.

The influence arising from the claim of right, a sense of obligation, the feeling, I ought.

The influence of fear ; a sense of guilt and dread of punishment.

The influence of hope, arising from a view of the promises of the gospel.

These combine to control the will.

These powerful motives so far counteract the depraved tendency of the will, as to throw the sinner upon the responsibility of his self determining power.

God having thus wrought in the sinner to will, he must now will for himself.

This willing on his part embraces two points,

A will to be saved,

A will to work that salvation out.

2. God works in us to do.

This God does by giving us ability to perform what is willed, as well as merely to will it.

The motive power or influence is from God.

The strength is from God.

The moral power is from God.

Two peculiar characteristics mark this work of God within us.

1. It is consistent with our moral agency.

The will is not subverted, but acts freely.

2. It is God's good pleasure.

The meaning is, the goodness of his pleasure.

II. HOW ARE WE REQUIRED TO IMPROVE UPON THIS WORK OF GOD WITHIN US, BY WORKING OUR SALVATION OUT?

1. We must repent, while God supplies the motives and grace of repentance.

2. We must work the work of faith while God gives the power of believing.

3. We must work the work of obedience, must do every duty, while God reveals his will, and presses its claims upon us.

4. This work must be persevered in until our salvation is worked out, is finished.

5. This work is to be performed with fear and trembling.

Fear lest we should fail.

Trembling in view of the consequences.

What remains is for me to attempt to enforce the important work upon your attention.

This I will attempt from three considerations.

1. The important object to be secured.

It is our salvation, our own salvation.

Every other interest vanishes in comparison with this.

What is worldly honor in comparison with salvation ?

What are worldly riches in comparison with salvation ?

What are worldly pleasures in comparison with salvation ?

What is life and what is death in comparison with salvation ?

2. What God has done to bring this object within our reach.

This thought comprehends the whole display of divine mercy to this ruined world.

Who can estimate the love of the Father ?

Who can fully comprehend the sufferings of Jesus Christ ?

Who can sufficiently value the influence of the Holy Spirit, brooding, moving upon the face of this dark world ?

3. The short and uncertain period in which we must secure this great object, if we secure it at all.

If it be not made sure during life's brief period, it is lost forever.

How short then is the longest life as an introduction to an eternal destiny.

But how few fill up the measure of a long life.

How many are cut off suddenly and unexpectedly.

How dare rational beings live in neglect of this great work ?

Such an one is like the blind man approaching the dreadful precipice.

Will you not be persuaded at last to attend to your salvation, before it be lost forever ?

FAITH, HOPE AND CHARITY.

"New abideth faith, hope, charity, these three ; but the greatest of these is charity."—1 Cor. xiii. 13.

It was necessary that God, in making a revelation of his will, should confirm it by extraordinary gifts.

When God spake by Moses, he showed signs and wonders.

So the prophets often wrought miracles in connection with their communications.

The ministry of Christ was one continued scene of wonders.

So also did the apostles work miracles.

But when God had done making communications to be written, he ceased to work those visible wonders.

The apostles were the last of the inspired class.

To this Paul doubtless alludes in the text ; now abideth faith, hope, charity.

Miracles are about to cease, but religion will remain the same in its nature.

It consists of three elements, which shall remain the same ; these are faith, hope and charity.

I. Let us inquire into the nature of these elements of true religion.

1. Faith takes the lead in the apostle's arrangement, of these three christian virtues.

What then is faith ?

(1.) Faith is a belief in the truth of Christianity, as a system of revealed religion.

(2.) Faith includes trust in God through the gospel plan of salvation.

This trust supposes several things.

A sense of our lost condition, and dependence.

An apprehension of Christ as our atoning sacrifice, and only medium of approach to God.

An appreciation of the promises of God, as applicable to us, and as yea, and amen in Christ Jesus.

A giving up and letting go of every thing else.

A purpose of heart to obey the gospel.

2. Let us inquire what is hope ?

Hope consists of desire and expectation.

(1.) We hope for nothing which we do not desire.

(2.) We hope for nothing which we do not expect.

(3.) We hope for whatever we both desire and expect.

Apply this to Christian hope.

Heaven is the object of the Christian's hope.

Have you a desire to be saved ?

Do you desire to be saved in God's method of saving sinners ?

If you have a desire to go to heaven in God's way, you would be found walking in it.

But have you an expectation of heaven ; that you will reach that happy land ?

Are you on your way to heaven ?

Are you getting ready for heaven ?

Should you die now where you are, and as you are, would you go to heaven ?

3. But what is Charity, the third and last element of religion ?

The word here rendered charity, is usually rendered love.

It relates to God, and where it exists it will produce obedience.

It relates to men, and where it exists it will produce all right conduct towards them.

II. Let us inquire wherein it may be said that charity is the greatest of the three.

1. Charity or love is the greatest in view of its source.

Faith and hope are states of the human mind.

Love has its fountain in the God-head.

2. Love is greatest in its efficiency, both as it works by us and for us.

As it works by us, it is the grace that is ever laden with the fruit of all good works.

Suppose a needy stranger to present himself at your door, and you summons up the three graces to see what shall be done.

Faith and hope may both send him on to the next door, but love will do the deed on the spot.

Love is also greatest as it works for us.

But what can it do more than faith and hope ?

Faith supplies the place of sight ; " we walk by faith, not by sight."

Hope keeps us " as an anchor sure and steadfast."

If faith and hope bring us to heaven, it is the work of love to fit us for heaven.

3. There can be no doubt that love will appear the greatest in the closing scene.

Faith and hope will soon have done their work, as conditions of salvation, but love is salvation itself, and will abide forever.

If, as some believe, faith and hope will exist in heaven, they

will not sustain the same relation to our progressive salvation that they do now.

They seem to go as pioneers to search out the land, but love treasures up all its fruits.

They appear to change their objects, but love is as steady as the needle to the pole, after God.

If faith and hope shall exist after we enter heaven to push us on, love will constitute the reservoir in the soul which will treasure all up, as faith searches out new fields of delight, and as hope drinks deeper and deeper of the fountains of the God-head.

Have we these Christian graces ?

Have we got them in lively exercise ?

• "My passions hold a pleasing reign,
When love inspires my breast ;
Love the divinest of the train,
The sovereign of the rest.

This is the grace must live and sing,
When faith and hope shall cease ;
Must sound from every joyful string,
Through the sweet groves of bliss.

PRAYER FOR ALL MEN.

"I exhort, therefore, that first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men."—1 TIM. II. 1.

"Therefore," denotes that what follows is a conclusion from what has preceded.

It refers to Chapter i. 15, 16 : "This is a faithful saying," &c.

If Christ came to save the worst of sinners, and consequently, all sinners, then prayer should be made for all men, of every class.

I. Your attention is invited to the nature of the exercise commanded.

The whole consists of supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks.

1. Supplications denote that particular part of prayer which deprecates evil.

We often find it necessary to pray against evil.

2. Prayers denote that part of our pleading with God, in which we ask him for the blessings we need.

There are many things to pray for, as well as things to pray against, or to deprecate.

3. Intercessions denotes the putting forth of our influence in the cause of others.

4. Thanksgiving is a formal acknowledgment of the blessings already received.

This is proper for ourselves and others.

II Your attention is invited to the proper subjects of this exercise.

For whom are supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks to be offered?

For all men, says the text.

All men includes,

1. Ourselves, we must pray for ourselves first.

2. All men includes our own households, and immediate friends.

3. All men includes our religious associates, with whom we are united in church relation.

4. All men includes our neighbors, and acquaintances, who are not christians.

5. All men includes the universal church.

6. All men includes the whole world of humanity.

III. Your attention is invited to some of the reasons for this exercise of prayer.

1. God is good to all, able and willing to save all.

2. Christ died for all.

3. Paul exhorts us to pray for all, and he understood the will of God on the subject.

REMARKS.

1. This text provides for no liturgy.

It does not contemplate forms of prayer.

Prayer should be the present out-breathing of the heart, in view of present wants.

2. The text relates to christian assemblies for public worship, and it takes for granted that such will be praying assemblies.

"First of all," first in order of time.

First in importance.

Devout prayer is the soul of devotion, and without it, every other part is empty.

It is not the work of the preacher alone to pray.

When the preacher leads, every heart should join.

3. The subject suggests the inquiry, how many are there who really pray?

Words are not prayers of themselves, however arranged.

Desires are not prayers of themselves, however ardent.

It requires desires expressed in words, coming from the heart, winged by faith, to constitute real prayer.

How many, rather how few pray?

Every one ought to pray.

4. There are too many who never pray for themselves.

Such cannot pray for all men.

Is it not wonderful that men dare live without prayer?

God commands it of all.

Weakness, wants and dangers demand it.

READING—A DISCOURSE TO THE YOUNG.

BY REV. R. DONKERSLEY.

"Give attendance to reading."—1 TIM. IV. 13.

PROEM.. The great distinguishing trait between man and all the inferior being formed by the plastic hand of our Almighty Creator is mind. The lower animals are governed by passions, appetites and instincts. Sometimes, as the result of skillful and laborious training on the part of man, brutes will attain to what we term sagacity. Beyond this they never go.

Of all the inhabitants of our planet, man claims, as his exclu-

sive prerogative, the faculty to contemplate, to ponder, to reason, to judge, to infer, to decide, to act rationally.

The mental endowments of our race, unquestionably, admit of illimitable expansion. Intellectual giants there have been in all ages of the world, who have given practical illustration of the fact that God hath made his favorite creature, man, but little lower than the angels.

Manifestly, it is the will of our Creator that our mental powers be raised to the highest state of culture of which they are susceptible. God has amply furnished the facilities for such culture. Decidedly the most valuable of such facilities is that found in an elevated and sanctified press.

There is but little ground of hope that the youth of the present day will ever attain to honorable distinction in future years, unless, in compliance with apostolic exhortation, they "give attendance to reading."

PLEASURES AND ADVANTAGES OF READING.

Reading is a pursuit which affords solid and substantial enjoyment.

Gibbon, the celebrated historian, says : "A taste for books is the pleasure and glory of my life, I would not exchange it for the wealth of the Indies. Montesquieu says : "With me study has been a sovereign remedy against disgust of life, having never had any vexation which an hour's reading has not dissipated."

What more pleasing scene this side of heaven than the following? The tea-table has been cleared away, the family have resorted to the sitting-room, the blinds have been drawn upon the windows, the glowing fire is frisking in the open grate, the gas light throws its mild rays upon the centre-table around which the entire family have gathered ; one of that number reads aloud from some highly entertaining and instructive volume, while all the rest are engaged in some light, merely mechanical, employment. Occasionally the book is closed, and an interesting and friendly discussion takes place upon its contents. That young man, or that young woman are objects of sincere pity who cannot find enjoyment in such a domestic circle.

Reading affords a profitable investment for spare moments, and endows us with the rare privilege of selecting our own company.

The sum total of some people's spare moments, in the course of a life time, would run up to an astounding aggregate. These spare moments may be spent in the choicest society which the present, or preceding generations have ever furnished.

Says Dr. Young : " Literature opens a back door out of the busy and idle world, into a delicious garden of moral and intellectual perils, and flowers, the key of which is denied to the rest of mankind. Our happiness no longer lives on charity, nor bids fair for a fall, by leaning on that most precarious and thorny pillow, another's pleasure for our repose."

Dr. Channing says : " It is chiefly through books we enjoy intercourse with superior minds, and these invaluable means of communication are within the reach of all. In the best books great men talk to us, and give us their most precious thoughts, pour their souls into ours. God be thanked for books. They are the voices of the distant and the dead, and make us heirs of the spiritual life of past ages. Books are the true levellers. They give to all who will faithfully use them, the society, the spiritual presence of the best and greatest of our race. No matter how poor I am, no matter though the prosperous of my own time will not enter my obscure dwelling, if the sacred writers will enter and take up their abode under my roof—if Milton will cross my threshold to sing to me of Paradise—and Shakspeare to open to me the world of imagination—and Franklin to enrich me with his practical wisdom, I shall not pine for want of intellectual companionship, and I may become a cultivated man, though excluded from what is called the best society in the place where I live."

Reading is the chief means of intellectual improvement, and as a consequence, one of the most direct and honorable paths to distinguished social position, personal influence, and usefulness.

Rarely have we met with a truly great man who was not a passionate lover of books. Had it not been for the free use of books, what had the world ever known of such men as Locke, Newton, Wesley, Edwards, Franklin, Adams, Jefferson, Webster, Everett, Prescott, Irving, Burrett, and a host of others? Had these men lived and died prior to the discovery of the art of printing, their names might ever have been interred in oblivion's grave. Could we but form intimate acquaintance with the early life of

the men who now figure most conspicuously in the honorable and useful walks of life, we should find that they had spent much time in books.

CLASS AND METHOD OF READING MOST PROFITABLE.

Before speaking more directly of a class of reading deserving of unqualified commendation, we will venture some thought upon a class of reading which merits only the most unqualified condemnation.

Fiction is a species of literature, the indiscriminate reading of which has been attended with incalculable injury to the youth of both sexes. Not that all fiction is alike censurable. But he requires rare judgment who undertakes to draw the exact line of demarkation between the harmless and the hurtful of fictitious productions. Of the reading of the great mass of fiction it may truthfully be said that,

It is a prodigal waste of precious time.

None should read for mere entertainment, or simply for mental amusement. All our reading should aim at the acquisition of useful knowledge—the improvement of head, heart and life. But who will dare affirm that novel-reading thus improves its votaries?

A certain editor discourses as follows upon this trash: "You may read many of the literary weekly newspapers for a year, and scarcely find a fact that will make you wiser and better,—all romance, fiction, lies, velvet, and feathers; little fiends equipped in smiles and crinoline, big scoundrels in epaulets with a love of a moustache, turning the heads of simpering maidens. The every day history of life ingeniously belied, and beautifully outraged."

It produces mental imbecility.

It cannot but be injurious that the human mind should never be called into effort. The habit of receiving pleasure without any exertion of thought by the mere excitement of curiosity and sensibility, may be justly ranked among the worst effects of habitual novel reading. Those who confine their reading to such books, dwarf their own faculties, and at length reduce their understanding to a deplorable imbecility.

It unfits the reader for a cheerful performance of daily duties, and for a real enjoyment of the natural pleasures of life.

A whole family brought to destitution in England, has had all its misfortunes clearly traced by the authorities, to an ungovernable passion for novel reading, entertained by the wife and mother. The husband was sober and industrious, but his wife was indolent and addicted to reading everything procurable in the shape of a romance. This led her utterly to neglect her husband, herself, and her eight children. One daughter, in despair, fled the parental roof, and threw herself into the haunts of vice. Another was found by the police chained by the feet to prevent her following her sister's example. The house exhibited the most offensive appearance of filth and indigence. In the midst of this pollution, privation and poverty, the cause of it sat reading the latest "sensation work" of the season, and refused to allow herself to be disturbed in the entertainment.

Frequently productions of this class are of a decidedly immoral character and tendency.

Numerous sad, and heart-rending facts might be given in evidence here.

Speaking more directly of instructive and profitable reading, the following will come under our commendation.

THE BIBLE. This is the Book of books. This is a divine production (2 Tim. iii. 16, 17; 2 Peter i. 19, 20, 21.) All other books contain merely human thoughts. The Bible sustains the same relation to all other books that the sun does to the planetary system. The Bible is the one grand source of inherent light. Human productions shine but in borrowed rays, derived from the sun of righteousness.

History should have special prominence in our reading.

This should comprise ancient and modern history, sacred and profane, civil, political and ecclesiastical history,—the history of our own nation and that of other nations. History crowds ages of existence into a few evening hours. Fields, cities, and realms—with their armies, arts, and revolutions, pass before our mental vision like a grand and ever changing panorama. Such reading is equally entertaining and instructive.

Biography is a class of reading which, with a good subject and an able author, is highly entertaining and equally instructive.

Such literature gives resurrection to the eminent dead. Their

whole course of life, and the successive steps by which they ascended to their lofty, their honorable, their useful position, are distinctly mirrored before our mind. We thus learn how, by what means, they attained to their greatness and usefulness.

Well written books of travel should not be overlooked by those readers who would happily blend pleasure with profit.

But few of us can command the time, and the pecuniary means for extensive travel, either in our native land, or in foreign countries. In reading the efforts of the tourist's pen we may travel extensively, at but a trifling outlay of funds. In such pages we can, within the period of but a few hours, sail over rivers, lakes, seas, and oceans. In such volumes we can traverse islands and continents, enjoying all the pleasures, and escaping all the fatigue, the dangers, and the disasters of the actual tourist.

Poetry should not be neglected or overlooked.

He is not a truly wise man who is too practical, too strictly utilitarian to spend an occasional hour in the gallery of the poet's fanciful paintings. Here we find the language of harmony, and the brilliant ideals of genius. These address themselves to the finer sensibilities of our nature. Some one has aptly defined poetry to be, "The best thoughts of the best minds, arrayed in the choicest language."

"Poetry is itself a thing of God ;
He made his prophets poets ; and the more
We feel of poesy do we become
Like God in love and power, under-workers."

As to the MANNER of reading, it should be,
Carefully and scrupulously select.

We have got authors bad, good, and indifferent—dull, sprightly, saintly and demonish. Lord Bacon felicitously remarks, "Some books are to be tasted, some swallowed, and some few chewed and digested." Daniel Webster says, "The Caliph who destroyed the Alexandrian library has been, perhaps, not unjustly censured by subsequent ages ; yet he consumed, doubtless, much that was worthless, and something it may be, that was obnoxious. We do not need so general a eremition, but there is much of our later literature that would be better for the text of fire." Great care is required in making a proper selection of reading matter ;

nor, in a matter of such importance, should the youth of our day be ashamed to solicit the advice of persons of intelligence and experience.

We should read with care and deliberation.

We must not pass o'er the printed page as the high mettled horse rushes along the race-course. We should frequently pause in our reading, and try to assure ourselves as to whether we correctly understand our author ; and also that we may inquire as to the soundness of his views.

System should be brought to bear upon our reading.

Let us, as far as possible, have our set times for reading—pursuing a certain class of reading at a given time. We should bring into requisition one or other of the numerous methods given to the public, for obtaining ready reference to what we have read, or else invent a method of our own.

CLOSING REMARKS.

One says, "I have no taste for reading." This is much to be regretted. But such a taste may be acquired. Contend for the boon.

Another says, "I have no time for reading." Please reflect for a moment, and see if there is not some mistake here. Where and how are your long winter evenings spent ? What of the Sabbath hours, not spent in public worship ?

We hear another say, "I have not the means wherewith to purchase books." Have you no expensive habits which might easily and beneficially be dispensed with ?

A CALL FROM DARKNESS TO LIGHT.

"That ye should show forth the praise of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light."—1 PETER II. 9.

The text is addressed to Christians.

It describes the great change effected in them by expressive figures.

A change from darkness to marvellous light.

This change is represented as having been effected by God.

"Who hath called you," &c.

Your attention will be called to the several leading thoughts in the text, in the simple order in which they are suggested by the text itself.

I. OUR NATURAL STATE IS A STATE OF DARKNESS.

This was fearfully true of the Gentiles, to whom the apostle wrote.

It is fearfully true of all sinners.

1. There is the darkness of ignorance.

How often is it the case that we find men more ignorant of the plan of salvation, than of anything else.

Often when the head is light, the heart is dark and ignorant of experimental religion, and of the life of God in the soul.

2. There is the darkness of guilt and spiritual death.

"You hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and in sins." Eph. ii. 1.

3. There is the darkness of desperation.

"Ye are without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world." Eph. ii. 12.

Such persons must be fearfully dark. They have no hope which throws one ray of light on human destiny beyond the hour of life's dark going down.

II. FROM THIS NATURAL STATE OF DARKNESS CHRISTIANS HAVE BEEN, AND SINNERS MUST BE CALLED.

Who hath called you out of darkness.

The sinner would never find his own way out of darkness.

God calls them out,

1. By the ministry of his word.

Jesus Christ said to Saul, "I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness, both of the things which thou hast seen, and those things in the which I will appear unto thee; delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom I now send thee; to open their blind eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God." Acts xxvi. 16-18.

2. To the call by the ministry of the word, God adds the influence of the Holy Spirit.

The Spirit moves upon the hearts of men, and applies the word preached or read.

By the combined influence of truth and the Holy Spirit men are called out of darkness.

III. SINNERS ARE CALLED INTO GOD'S MARVELLOUS LIGHT.

This denotes the whole change involved in the process of becoming a Christian.

They are called into God's light, or the light of God.

The darkness was their own, not God's.

"God is light and in him is no darkness at all." 1 John i. 5.

To be called into God's light, is to be called to a knowledge of God, and enjoyment of God.

This light into which they are called is,

1. The light of knowledge.

"For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." 2 Cor. iv. 6.

No comment can improve this text.

2. The light of happiness composed of peace, hope and joy.

These three elements of happiness always exist together in christian experience.

"The kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost." Rom. xiv. 17.

"Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost." Rom. xv. 13.

"Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." 1 Peter i. 8.

The light of entire Christian experience is comprehended in the words, "his marvellous light."

BUT WHAT IS MARVELLOUS LIGHT?

Marvellous is something that excites wonder.

1. It is marvellous in its origin.

It comes from God to the dark and lost.

It is marvellous that God should shine out with such light upon such a dark and lost world.

2. It is marvellous in its history or mode of development.

It found its way to man only through the death and mediation of Christ. It is revealed through the entire plan of human redemption.

3. It is marvellous in its progress. "But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." Prov. iv. 18.

Every other light wastes by the process of shining, and is consumed in proportion to the light emitted.

4. It will prove marvellous in its final degree.

The light of the saved in heaven is beyond our present knowledge.

"Now are we the sons of God; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is." 1 John iii. 2.

"Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able to subdue all things unto himself." Phil. iii. 21.

"For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." Rom. viii. 18.

"But we all, with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." 2 Cor. iii. 18.

"And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars ferever and ever." Dan. xii. 3.

IV. THOSE THUS CALLED OUT OF DARKNESS INTO GOD'S MARVELLOUS LIGHT, SHOULD SHOW FORTH HIS PRAISE.

Christians should show forth the praise of God.

1. By word of mouth, in prayers, thanksgiving, and songs of devotion.

"By him, therefore, let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to his name." Heb. xiii. 15.

2. Christians should show forth the praise of God by a life conformed to his will.

The divine likeness impressed upon the heart should shine in the life.

The divine benevolence should throb out its impulse for human weal in christian zeal to save souls.

Being called into his light, we should let our light so shine that others may see our good works and glorify God also.

3. All the saved will show forth his praise in heaven.

They will shine to his glory, to be seen, we know not by how many worlds.

They will shine to his glory, in contrast with the darkness from which he will have saved them.

Have we showed forth the praise of God, as a result of having been called out of darkness into his marvellous light?

Have we rendered the light of God, into which we have been called visible to others along our path?

Does it shine on our business transactions, and in all our intercourse with the world?

Or have we confined our religion to the momentary ebullitions of a song or a prayer, or an occasional rhapsody.

But how many have not been called out of darkness into light?

Why have you not been called? Is God partial?

How long do you expect to have to wait before God will call you?

The fault is yours; God has called, and you have refused to obey, and closed your eyes against the light.

CHRISTIAN ATTAINMENT.

"That I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus."—Phil. iii. 12.

The word apprehend, as here used, signifies to seize or take, and the text means, that I may seize or attain to that for which Christ apprehended, or called me by his gospel. This was the

great purpose of his life, to become all that Christ designed him to be. To attain to that perfection of Christian character that the gospel can accomplish. Every Christian should aim at nothing less than the highest state of Christian integrity.

There are two points to which I particularly ask your attention :

1. The ultimate object of Christian attainment.

2. The progressive steps by which it may be attained.

I. The attainment embraces two points.

1. Perfection of Christian character. At the foundation of this lies a sound conversion of heart. Without this, there can be no Christian character. But the development of Christian perfection is a life long work. "First the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear." First a babe, desiring the sincere milk of the word, then growing to the perfect stature of a man in Christ Jesus. "Who shall confirm you to the end, that ye may be blameless." 1 Cor. i. 8. "That ye may be found of him, without spot and blameless." 2 Pet. iii. 14.

Nothing short of this Christian perfection, would satisfy Paul. Nothing less should satisfy us.

2. The ultimate attainment of the Christian is a home in heaven. To dwell with God which he calls the resurrection of the dead, the future glorification of the saints in light. Christ says, "If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself," &c. John xiv. 3. "A house not made with hands," &c.

II. Consider the steps of progress.

1. Renouncing all former hopes and pursuits for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ. If we have a single object or pursuit, that we cannot give up for Christ, we can never obtain pardon, or enter the Christian path. If after we have found a Saviour precious, we take back the world, which we have once renounced, we make no further progress in the divine life.

2. To be found in Christ, as Noah was in the ark, safe from the fear of evil. Not having on our own righteousness, but that of Christ. Having faith in the atonement made by Jesus.

III. To know Christ and the power of his resurrection.

1. As a pledge of the truth of Christianity, and of our own resurrection.

2. To know the resurrection of Christ in our own hearts. Having Christ in the heart, the hope of glory.

3. To know the fellowship of his sufferings. To have sympathy with his sufferings and death : to be made conformable to his death ; i. e., crucified with Christ, dead to sin and alive to God. By these purifying influences, we may be fitted for the kingdom of glory, and attain that state of unending felicity and likeness to Christ, for which we are apprehended of him.—*Morning Star.*

A SOLEMN MEETING.

“Prepare to meet thy God.”—Amos iv. 12.

These words were addressed to the Israelites, under peculiar circumstances. They had revolted and sinned, and God punished them, but they had not returned from their evil ways. See verses 6–11.

God threatens them with additional and untold calamity, in view of which he calls upon them to prepare to meet their God.

The words are solemn and apply well to us, if we will heed them.

It is proper to consider the interview portended, the preparation to be made for it, and the considerations that enforce the admonition.

I. THE MEETING, THE INTERVIEW PORTEDED.

We must meet God ; “prepare to meet thy God.”

We are always under the eye of God.

God is always near, and we are surrounded by his presence.

There are three distinct interviews for which we should prepare.

1. God’s providential judgments here.

This nation is now summoned to meet God, as much as the ancient Israelites were.

Earlier repentance could have saved us from the present calamities.

2. Death will be a time of meeting with God.

Death is God's arresting officer.

No money can bribe death.

No influence can turn him away.

No skill can deceive or evade him.

No power can resist him.

3. The final judgment will be a solemn meeting.

"We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ."

"God shall bring every work into judgment with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil."

II. THE PREPARATION TO BE MADE FOR THE MEETING.

The preparation is the simple work of reforming ourselves, by correcting what is wrong.

1. There must be the work of sincere and deep repentance.

2. The work of faith in Christ, our atoning sacrifice, which will bring a free pardon.

3. The work of obedience ; we must forsake sin, and do our duty.

III. LET ME ATTEMPT TO ENFORCE THE ADMONITION, "PREPARE TO MEET THY GOD."

1. Let all prepare, for all are concerned.

The young, the middle aged, the old.

The rich, the poor, the learned and unlearned.

You have all got to meet God.

2. Prepare immediately, 'tis madness to defer.

"Now is the accepted time." "To-day if ye will hear his voice."

3. Prepare earnestly and thoroughly.

The important interests involved demand thorough work.

The interview is sure and cannot be avoided.

It is God you are to meet, the eternal, the all-wise and infinite Jehovah.

Said Paul, "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."

Fearful, if unprepared, "For our God is a consuming fire."

"Be ye reconciled to God."

BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION.

There are several different methods of interpretation pursued by different classes of religionists.

The first of these which we shall name, is that of the Rationalists, who assume to bring the Scriptures to the test of human reason. All enlightened christians feel bound to make the best use of their reason in arriving at a correct understanding of the Scriptures, but when they are satisfied what their language teaches, interpreted by the common rules of language, they accept their teaching as authoritative, and do not appeal from it. The Rationalists go further ; they not only interpret in the light of reason, but they subject the principles clearly taught in the Scriptures to the test of reason. They not only inquire, what do the Scriptures teach ? but, is what they teach according to reason ? If what the Scriptures teach is, in their view, according to reason, they take the liberty to modify or reject, as the Scriptures must not be allowed to teach or contain anything which contradicts reason.

This rule is not applied to the writings of men ; the fact that a book, claiming to have been written by, and to represent the views of any man, contains unreasonable views, is no proof that the man whose name it bears did not write it, and that it does not represent his views, because men often make statements that are unreasonable and untrue. The Bible claims to be a revelation from God, and must be reasonable and truthful ; therefore what is in it unreasonable or untruthful, must be rejected as no part of the Bible, or be so modified as to make it conform to reason. Such is the Rationalistic mode of interpretation.

As plausible as this may appear, it is fallacious as a rule of interpretation. The principal objections to this mode of interpretation are,

1. If the rule be true and reliable, it must supercede the necessity of a revelation from God. The rule assumes that reason is capable of determining what is true and what is not, independently of revelation. If it cannot do this, it cannot sit in judgment on the Bible, to decide what part of it is reasonable and true, and

what is not. If reason can determine what is true and what is not, independently of revelation, it needs no revelation to help it to truth, but must be capable of making its own discovery of all needful truth. The rule places reason above revelation, and supercedes its necessity.

2. The rule misapprehends the use of reason in the interpretation of the Scriptures, and misapplies it. Reason has two offices to perform in regard to revelation.

First, it is called into exercise to determine what is a revelation from God and what is not. It is the office of reason to examine and weigh the evidence which proves the Bible to be a revelation from God. When all the evidence is considered, it appears much more in accordance with reason to receive it as a revelation, than to reject it. It would be very unreasonable to suppose such proof could exist, and the Bible still be untrue.

The second office of reason is to determine what the Bible teaches, as a revelation from God. Reason does not, as the rule suppose, take its own independent conceptions or discoveries of truth, and bring the Scriptures to them to determine what they teach. It takes the Scriptures as a whole, and in all their parts, and connections, and all their words in all of their combinations, and decides what they teach by the common rules for the interpretation of language. These rules have been explained in previous articles. Thus is reason the power or faculty that interprets, in the light of these rules, and not the rule of interpretation. When reason has decided that the Bible contains a revelation from God, and that it teaches such and such things, its work is done ; it cannot go behind these its own decision, and say that this sense which it gives needs modifying, and that must be rejected as untrue.

When reason has considered the proofs that the Scriptures were given by inspiration of God, the fact that any doctrine is affirmed, or any event is declared to have transpired, is a sufficient reason for believing the same. We need only to understand that the language of the Scriptures, according to the admitted rules, for the interpretation of language, which have been explained in previous articles, affirms the doctrine or the event in question, and the thing is settled. As reason, our enlightened judgment,

has decided that the Scriptures were given by inspiration of God, what they clearly teach must be true, and the only remaining work is to learn what they teach, and this is determined by learning what is the sense of the words they employ. The true sense of the Scriptures therefore, is that sense which their words express, according to true and enlightened reason, under the common and approved rules of language. But this does not make reason the rule of interpretation, but only the instrument by which acknowledged rules of interpretation are applied. Thus is it seen that the Rationalistic mode of interpretation must be false.

PREACHING IS NOT THE WHOLE WORK.

The minister who supposes that his work is done up for a week when he has preached his two sermons on the Sabbath, takes a very limited and imperfect view of his calling. Preaching is God's appointed means of saving men, but not the only means ; to render it effectual, it must be supported by pastoral labors, social intercourse, and private instruction. Within the limits of almost every congregation, there are individuals and families that belong to no congregation, and go to church nowhere. These should be hunted up and cared for. These often feel as did the Psalmist, when he said, " No man cared for my soul ; or as the more expressive margin reads, " No man sought after my soul." In the minds of these outcasts, these neglecters of the house of God, there are many reasons for their course, which to them appear real, but which might be removed by friendly intercourse. They do not attend church because they have not been in the habit of attending. They are poor and cannot appear at church as others do. It is well, in their view, for the wealthy, and such as are able so to attire themselves as not to appear singular, but for them to go, wearing the marks of their poverty, and with their unadorned little ones, whom they love as dearly

as the wealthy love theirs, would be a mortification too great to be borne. Their poverty is burden enough in its seclusion, but to drag it out to be a gazing stock in a fashionable assembly upon the Sabbath day, they feel is too much to be borne. However much of fiction there may be in these reasons, they are real to them, and they can be removed only by personal intercourse and kindness. Go among them, talk to them, and to their children, in words of kindness and solicitude for their welfare. Make an impression on their minds that they are really cared for, that the minister is the friend of the poor, and you will kindle within them desires and hopes they have never felt, and wake them up to a new life of which they have never dreamed.

Let the minister who would do most good, go to the poor ; go to them in their houses. You must not wait for the poor to come to you ; go to them, search them out ; go where no others will go, seek out the friendless, the forsaken, the lost. Search out the abodes of poverty and wretchedness, the haunts of intemperance and vice ; go armed with words of kindness and sympathy, which are mighty to subdue, and with your heart burning with the love of God, and love for your race, and you will conquer.

LOVE AND REVERENCE TRUTH.

No man is fit to preach the Gospel, who has not a deep and abiding love and reverence for truth. It is true that truth, religious truth, is to be found in the Scriptures, but unless we love and reverence it, we shall not find it there in its fullness, and shall not bring it out in its brightness, and shall not impress it upon the minds of our hearers in its power. The preacher should always have the strongest convictions possible, in his own mind, of the truth of what he preaches.

The preacher should have such a love and reverence for the truth, as to lead him to present it, and rely upon it, in its own native simplicity, and light, and force, without attempting to mend

it, modify it, paint it, lighten it, or soften it. The truth should never be distorted or exaggerated, with a view to startle, to produce a deep impression, or with a view to be thought eloquent. Such attempts appear like efforts to sharpen the sword of truth, sharper than God has made it. Neither should the truth be softened, diluted, or obscured, until its glory is hid and its power is gone.

Ministers may be tempted to this course, to accommodate the truth to the prejudices and passions of men. Some may think their hearers will embrace the truth half obscured, who would reject it presented glowing and burning. Some may suppose that by softening the truth, by knocking off its sharp corners, or by concealing its burning coals, under doubtful and mystifying words, they will secure the attention and friendship of those who would be angry at them, if they exhibited the whole truth without disguise. Such attempt to wind the edge of the sword of the Spirit, upon the assumption that God has made it too sharp. No man is fit to preach the gospel, whose love and reverence for the truth would not make him a ready martyr for it, rather than to betray it.

But the timid say, "we must be prudent." Prudent, yes, we must be prudent; but it is not the dictate of prudence to exaggerate, obscure or conceal the truth, but so carefully present it in its own true light, armed with its own power. Those who would assay to make the sword of the Spirit sharper by grinding it upon the stone of human wit, and those who would wind its edge with silk to make it cut without hurting, are too imprudent to preach the Gospel.

"My burden is light," said the blessed Redeemer. A light burden, indeed, which carries him that bears it. I have looked through all nature for a resemblance of this, and I seem to find a shadow of it in the wings of a bird, which are indeed borne by the creature, and yet support her flight towards heaven.

THE TEST OF OUR DISCIPLESHIP.

"Now if any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his."—ROM. VIII. 9.

There are but two general classes of persons, with regard to moral character ; those who are Christ's and those who are not his.

These classes will admit of subdivisions, yet they are all saints or sinners.

To the one or the other of these classes, every person in this assembly belongs.

The text furnishes us with the rule by which we may determine our character, whether we are Christ's or not.

If we have the Spirit of Christ, we are his, are Christians, are saints.

If we are destitute of the Spirit of Christ, we are none of his, are not Christians, are sinners.

By the Spirit of Christ, I understand the Holy Spirit.

The connection requires this construction, as will readily be seen.

The apostle is speaking of the Holy Spirit throughout the paragraph.

"But ye are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his."

"But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you." Verse 11.

"For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." Verse 14.

"The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirits that we are the children of God." Verse 16.

It is clear from these Scriptures that the Holy Spirit is meant, by the Spirit of Christ.

Let us then inquire,

- I. What is it to be Christ's ? in the sense of this text ; and
- II. What is the nature of the proof by which we may decide, whether we are his or not ?

I. What is it to be Christ's in the sense of this text?

It is not merely to be his creatures ; all are his in this sense.

It is not to be his merely by right of ransom by price ; he "gave himself a ransom for all ;" "He tasted death for every man."

It is not merely to belong to some visible church.

To be Christ's implies three things.

1. We must be his by willing submission on our part.

"Son, give me thine heart," is the demand.

We must respond,

"Here, Lord, I give myself away,
'Tis all that I can do."

2. We must be Christ's by free acceptance on his part.

This acceptance implies pardon, regeneration, and adoption.

3. We must be Christ's by actual possession. Jesus Christ dwells in every heart which he claims as his own.

There are no unoccupied hearts ; if Christ does not fill our hearts, the world and satan will.

All are redeemed by price, but there must be a redemption by power, and actual possession.

"To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you the hope of glory." Col. i. 27.

Hence it is that "if any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of his."

The Holy Spirit is the great renewing power, without the action of which within, no man is Christ's in the high sense of the text.

II. The nature of the evidence by which we may decide whether we are Christ's or not.

The proof is two-fold, positive and negative.

The positive or affirmative is this ; if we are Christ's, we have his Spirit, and by the presence of his Spirit in us, we know that we are his.

But how are we to know that we have his Spirit ?

1. If we have his Spirit, it will bear witness with our spirits that we are the children of God. Rom. viii. 16.

2. If we have the Spirit of Christ, it will produce peace and joy in our hearts.

"In the world ye shall have tribulation, but in me ye shall have peace."

"We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

"The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness."

3. If we have the Spirit of Christ, it will assist us in our work.

It will enliven our devotion.

It will assist us in the discharge of our duties generally.

Who that is a Christian has not at some time, felt the assistance of the Spirit?

Who has not seen and felt the power of the Spirit developed in others?

The negative proof is this; those who are not Christ's, have not his Spirit, and by the absence of his Spirit, they may know that they are not his.

But how may they know that they have not his spirit?

Those who do not know that they have it, may be sure they have not got it.

They may know that they have not got it by the absence of those fruits which the Spirit produces, and by which others know that they have it.

1. They have it not to witness with their spirits that they are the children of God.

2. They have it not to comfort and give them joy.

3. They have it not to help them in their work.

Even Christians do not always feel the same degree of the influence of the Spirit, but this strengthens rather than weakens their evidence of acceptance with God.

But when men never feel its gracious light and joy and power, they may take it for granted that they have it not, and that they are none of Christ's.

REMARKS.

1. All men do not sustain the same relation to Christ; some are his, and others are not his.

Could the line which separates between these two classes be rendered visible, it would be seen dividing this congregation.

Each may now know to which class he belongs.

We may deceive our fellow beings, but we cannot deceive God, and need not deceive ourselves.

God knows the state of the heart, and we may know whether we are Christ's or not.

If we deceive ourselves, it can be only for a season ; the honest hour of death is likely to undeceive us, and the light of eternity will show us what we are.

How important is it for each to settle the question for himself now, while errors may be corrected.

2. Those who find, on examination, that they are not Christ's, ought to be alarmed in view of their condition.

They are not yet saved, they are unsaved.

They cannot be saved, until their relation to Christ is changed, and they become his in the sense of the text, and in the manner described.

If they remain as they are, none of his, let them consider that when Christ shall gather his elect from the four corners of the earth, he will take none but his own.

The rest will be gathered as tares to be burned.

3. The subject presents an encouraging prospect for all such as have the Spirit of Christ and are his.

If we are his, he will take care of us.

What need we fear if we are Christ's?

Those watchful eyes, that never sleep,
His own shall keep, when dangers rise.

“Lo I am with you always.”

We can sing amid the dangers of life,

“No burning heat by day, nor blasts of evening air,
Shall take my health away, if God be with me there :
Thou art my sun, and Thou my shade,
To guard my head, by night or noon.”

If we are Christ's he will claim us as the jewels of his crown, and as the stars to bestud the sky of his glory.

Not one of his will be overlooked or left behind.

If we live Christ's, we shall die his, and need not fear to meet the issue any where, and at any time.

Conscious that we are Christ's, we may look heaven in the face and sing,

"Hast Thou not given thy word, to save my soul from death?
And I can trust my Lord to keep my mortal breath :
I'll go and come, nor fear to die,
Till from on high, Thou call me home."

"Father I will that those thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory." John xvii. 24.

SECURITY IN WELL DOING

"Who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good."—
1 PETER III. 13.

A question often has the force of an affirmation.

The sense here is, no one can harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good.

To bring the text to bear practically and profitably upon our own religious interests, it is necessary to consider the manner of life supposed, following that which is good ; and the security affirmed of such as thus direct their course of life.

I. THE MANNER OF LIFE SUPPOSED.

To follow that which is good, we must live according to the law of right, and make the accomplishment of good the end at which we aim.

Following is here used in the sense of imitation.

Dr. MacKnight renders the text thus : "If ye be imitators of the good one."

To be imitators of the good one, or to imitate or follow that which is good, several things are necessary.

1. We must possess, in our measure, the mind and disposition of the Good One, that is, God.

God "is good unto all, and his tender mercies are over all his

works. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust."

We may imitate God by treating all with impartial justice, and benevolence.

Act towards all men as we suppose the mind of God is, between us and them.

2. We must obey God in order to be followers of that which is good.

All who do not obey God, follow that which is evil, not that which is good.

Obedience to God alone is good ; good for ourselves, good for others.

Good as a way, and good as an end.

II. THE SECURITY AFFIRMED OF SUCH AS FOLLOW THAT WHICH IS GOOD.

"Who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?"

All agencies may be summed up under four heads, God, angels, devils, and men.

None of these will harm us, if we follow that which is good.

1. God will not, but will be our friend, Father and protector.

His word is passed, his truth is pledged for our protection.

God is terrible to sinners, but he is the portion of the righteous, and in him they trust and are not afraid.

2. Angels will not harm us, if we be followers of that which is good.

"Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?"

3. Devils will not harm us if we be followers of that which is good.

They will not, because they cannot.

God will not suffer satan to harm us if we obey and trust in him, but will bruise him under our feet.

4. Men will not, cannot harm us, if we be followers of that which is good.

This is the main point, the thing which the apostle designed to say.

Good men will not harm us, they have no disposition to do it.

There are but few men bad enough to harm a peaceable, devout-

ed christian. who does good, and only good, to his fellow beings around him.

The few wicked men who would harm the good, God usually restrains and defeats.

Their attempts upon the righteous often recoil upon themselves.

When wicked men are permitted to inflict partial and temporary evil upon the pious, God will overrule such partial evil for their final good.

"All things work together for good to them that love God."

Those cannot be really harmed, for whom all things work together for good.

REMARKS.

1. Sinners are the authors of their own ruin, and will never be able to charge it upon any persons but themselves.

There may be a thousand evil influences to draw us down to ruin, but they cannot harm us unless we yield to them.

We can and should resist every evil influence.

There is not a power in the universe that can ruin one human being without the consent of his own will.

God demands of sinners, "Why will you die?"

If there were any sufficient and efficient reason, beyond the sinner's control, he might answer his Maker in the premises, and show a reason why he dies.

2. Those professors of religion, who charge their delinquencies upon God, the devil, the world, or fellow-sinners, are greatly in error.

All these combined could not harm you if you followed that which is good.

3. The truly pious have strong ground of encouragement.

Those who follow that which is good, may feel secure at all times, and in all places, and in all circumstances, where duty calls them.

No person need be afraid to do right, for who is he that will harm you if you do right.

Why are so many afraid to act out their own convictions of right?

It must arise from a want of confidence in God.

God is pledged to support the righteous, and cannot he be trusted?

4. In conclusion, who will now assume, and hereafter occupy this position of security?

You do not feel secure in the way of sin; fears are in your way.

You have carried your fears long enough, and felt the thrill of alarm often enough.

Here then seek shelter in well-doing from every danger.

Plant yourselves upon the everlasting rock of right, and winds may blow, and billows roll, the mountains shake, the earth tremble, and hell rage, but it will all be in vain; for it is written, "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High, shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence. His truth shall be thy shield and buckler. Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night, nor for the arrow that flieth by day, nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness, nor for the destruction that wasteth at noon-day." Psal. xci. 1-6.

Fly then to this safe refuge; why wander in the ways of sin, exposed to ruin every hour?

What if there be an occasional glimpse of sunshine flashing upon thy path from behind the clouds of the gathering storm, it is but for a moment.

The storm gathers deep and darker, and will sweep all unsheltered souls into ruin.

Fly then for refuge while the door of God's ark of gospel salvation is still open.

Come one, come all, and seek shelter in the everlasting security of right, before the storm overtakes you.

"Behold the Ark of God,
Behold the open door;
Hasten to gain that safe abode,
And rove exposed no more.

And when the waves of ire
Again the earth shall fill,
The Ark shall ride the sea of fire,
Then rest on Zion's hill."

THE PERFECT LAW OF LIBERTY.

"But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continue therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed."—JAMES I. 25.

This text is presented in contrast with the preceding verses.

The object is to persuade men to obey the gospel as well as to hear it.

"But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves."

The futility of hearing without obeying, is then set forth by a very striking comparison.

"For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass; for he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straitway forgetteth what manner of man he was."

In contrast with such a forgetful hearer, the obedient hearer is presented in the text.

The gospel is contemplated as a glass, in which a man sees himself, but forgets his features when he turns away from it. But if we look into the perfect law of liberty, and continue therein the end of looking is secured, the impression is not lost.

But the gospel is not only like a glass to those who hear without doing, but it is in fact the perfect law of liberty to those who obey it.

I. Why may the Gospel be called the perfect law of liberty? and,

II. By what means may we secure the blessings it proffers?

I. Why may the Gospel be called the perfect law of liberty?

1. The Gospel may be called a law, because it is a rule of action.

It is clearly preceptive.

It is both mandatory and prohibitory.

It is enforced by sanctions.

By promises and threatenings.

2. The Gospel is a perfect law, because it is free from all defects.

It is full, commanding all that is right, and forbidding all that is wrong.

It is spiritual, taking cognizance of the thoughts of the heart, as well as of overt acts.—This human law cannot do.

It is impartial and just in its retributions.—Here human laws often fail.

3. The Gospel is a law of liberty, because it gives liberty to all who obey it.

It emancipates the Jew from the bondage of the ceremonial law.

It emancipates the Gentile from the cruel bondage of Paganism, from Idolatry.

It emancipates the sinner from the bondage of sin, and the terror reign of his own corrupt nature.

Such is the perfect law of liberty.

II. By what means may we secure the blessings which this perfect law of liberty proffers?

1. We must look into it.

Stoop down to inspect closely.

So the original signifies.

Make an effort to understand.

Look into it to learn your duty.

Look into it, as into a glass, to see yourself, and compare your likeness with the perfect law.

2. We must continue in it.

This implies continued looking, in opposition to him who looks and goes away, and forgets.

As a result of continuing to look, it includes remembering, not forgetting.

Remember the law.

Remember ourselves.

It includes doing, obeying also.

This is implied in the expression, "a doer of the work."

Do all that the Gospel requires.

3. The person who thus looks into the perfect law of liberty, and continues therein, "is blessed in his deed." Marginal, "in his doing."

He realizes in his experience, what the Gospel teaches in its precepts and promises.

He has a revelation of the perfect law of liberty in his soul.

It emancipates him from sin.

It gives him a hope of heaven.

REMARKS.

1. Those who have looked into the perfect law of liberty, and are continuing therein, would do well to look a little closer.

2. Those who have looked and gone away, had better come back, and look again, and continue to look.

3. Those who have never looked, had better begin to look.

You know not your own moral likeness until you look into this perfect law.

WALKING WITH GOD.

"I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living."—PSAL. cxvi. 9.

The Psalmist is celebrating the goodness of God.

"Thou hast delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling." Verse 8.

As a means of showing his gratitude, he resolved to walk before the Lord in the land of the living.

Two leading thoughts claim our attention in connection with this text.

I. WHAT IS IT TO WALK BEFORE THE LORD IN THE LAND OF THE LIVING?

Walking in Scripture language, denotes manner of living, or the actions of life.

"Walk before me and be perfect." Gen. xvii. 1. "This is the way, walk ye in it." Isa. xxx. 21.

"We walk by faith, not by sight." 2 Cor. v. 7.

Walking before the Lord, denotes living under a sense of his presence, with proper reference to the fact that he sees every action and every thought.

All men walk before the Lord, in fact, but they do not realize it, do not regard it in their manner of living.

The expressed purpose of the Psalmist, is to keep the fact before the mind, that God sees him, and to perform all his actions in view of that fact.

To walk before the Lord *in the land of the living*, is to walk before him in this life.

No being can walk in the future world, otherwise than before the Lord.

The dark veil of humanity will be removed from between us and God.

But here we may forget God, and not walk as before him.

To walk before him in the land of the living implies,

1. The most profound reverence.

To realize that we are in the presence of him, before whom angels veil their faces, should excite reverence.

How little do the profane and giddy realize that the eye of God is upon them, and that his ear is open to their every word.

2. Humble, submissive and trustful dependence upon God.

It requires all these terms to fill out the idea intended.

Humility, submission and trustful dependence, are all connected.

3. Fervent gratitude for all the blessings received.

If we keep God before our eyes, we shall see all our blessings as coming from him.

4. A lively, cheerful zeal in the cause of God.

A sense of the divine presence cannot fail to animate us with zeal.

God himself is zealous in our cause.

5. All due obedience to the known will of God.

No person walks as before the Lord, when he disobeys God's known commands.

The act of sinning is the act of departing from God.

The sinner walks away from God, rather than before him.

"Your sins have separated between you and your God." Isa. lix. 2.

Obedience brings us nearer to God, and we walk before him, when we pursue the path of duty.

II. THE SECOND LEADING THOUGHT, REGARDS THE CONSIDERATIONS WHICH SHOULD URGE US TO WALK BEFORE THE LORD, IN THE LAND OF THE LIVING.

The fact that we are in the land of the living, furnishes us with many and strong reasons for walking before the Lord.

1. The land of the living is a land of dangers, against which God is our only defense.

It is madness to attempt life's journey without God.

There are not only physical dangers which a trust in God may turn aside, but moral and spiritual dangers and foes.

How many are dashed upon ruin's rocks in a moment.

How many are involved in moral ruin.

2. The land of the living, is a land of suffering and misery, which God only can render supportable.

"In the world ye shall have tribulation."

The world with all its beauties and pleasures, has no balm for an anguish stricken heart.

It has no cordial for a diseased mind.

It has no gift that can fill an empty soul.

What is all the world to a diseased mind?

What to a tortured body full of pain and anguish?

What is all the world to a dying man?

The presence and favor of God alone can support in the hour of suffering and death.

3. The land of the living is a land of probation.

Here we act for the spirit land, the land of immortality.

In the land of the living we form our characters for eternity.

Here we settle our own destiny. If we do not walk before the Lord here, we shall not walk before him in glory, when we shall have passed beyond the land of the living.

4. The land of the living is also the land of death.

The living must die.

The land of the living is full of graves and full of bones.

To die without God is terrible.

5. The land of the living, borders upon, and is very near eternity.

There we shall be unable to shut our eyes to the fact that God is present, and sees us.

We are liable, any moment, to step from the land of the living into eternity, so near to its border does our path in life lie.

Then ought we to walk before the Lord in the land of the liv-

ing, in such a manner as to be ready to tread the shore of eternity at any moment.

REMARKS.

1. How many of us are really walking before the Lord? Do we "endure as seeing him who is invisible?"

Has not the world blinded us by its dusty scenes?

Shake off its influence, and learn its emptiness.

In vain I trace creation o'er,
In search of solid rest;
The whole creation is too poor,
To make me truly blest.

Let earth and all her charms depart,
Unworthy of the mind;
In God alone this restless heart,
Enduring bliss can find.

Walk before the Lord and you will walk safely, and reach home.

2. Wanderers from God, let me plead with you to return and walk before the Lord.

You are drifting down the tide of years to the ocean of eternity.

Silent and slow they glide away;
Steady and strong the current flows,
Lost in eternity's wide sea—
The boundless gulf from whence it rose.

With it the thoughtless sons of men
Upon the rapid streams are borne,
Swift on to their eternal home,
Whence not one soul can e'er return.

Yet, while the shore, on either side,
Presents a gaudy flattering show,
We gaze, in fond amazement lost,
Nor think to what a world we go.

Come friends, turn your footsteps into the way of God's commandments, and live.

THE SELF-DESTRUCTION OF SINNERS.

"O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself, but in me is thy help."—HOSEA XIII. 9.

The Israelites were a representative people, and in God's dealings with them, is illustrated the principles of his government.

The text is a striking illustration of this truth.

What the text affirms of the Israelites is true of every sinner, and of a ruined world.

Two points demand attention.

I. The self-destruction of sinners.

1. Destruction supposes a lapsed state.

Nothing is destroyed while it remains as it was made.

2. Destruction supposes self-restoration to be impossible.

3. The sinner's destruction is self-produced.

"Thou hast destroyed thyself."

(1.) The sinner is the author of his own sin.

Who will say that he cannot refrain from sin?

(2.) The sinner's resistance of all the means of salvation is willful and obstinate.

He rejects the offers of mercy.

He breaks through every barrier that God interposes between him and destruction.

(3.) The sinner's own conscience is a witness to the fact that he destroys himself.

(4.) Such as have died in despair have left their testimony that they were the authors of their own ruin.

II. God's gracious offer of relief.

"In me is thy help."

God only can save.

1. God has made provision for the salvation of all sinners.

God gave his Son for our redemption.

Without the atonement there could have been no help for sinners.

2. God has sent us the gospel to help us back to him.

It gives us a knowledge of God.

A knowledge of ourselves.

A knowledge of our duty.

A knowledge of our destiny.

3. God has sent his Spirit into the world to help the sinner.
 To help him see.
 To help him feel.
 To help him desire.
 To help him seek.
 To help him believe.
 To help him love.
 To renew his whole soul.

REMARKS.

1. What a terrible thing is sin.
 Sin is the cause of all human suffering.
 Sin has armed death with all his terrors.
 Sin has given to the law its power to condemn.
 Sin clothes the judgment-seat with all its terrors.
 Sin has barred the gate of heaven.
 Sin has kindled the fires of hell.
2. What a wonder of mercy does the gospel develop.
 The greatness of the evil from which it saves, increases the magnitude of the salvation offered.
 But God not only saves from sin, but he glorifies the saved.
 "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound."
3. How utterly lost, must the finally lost be.
 Think of going from all the light and mercies of a gospel day, to a state of hopeless perdition.

THE SAINT'S FUTURE LIKENESS TO CHRIST.

"We know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is."—1 JOHN III. 2.

The preceding clause affirms that "it doth not yet appear what we shall be."

Two things are known, to wit:

1. We are now, already, the sons of God.
2. When Christ shall appear at the end of the world, we shall be like him.

To know that we shall be like him, and to know now what it is in degree to be like him, are not the same.

The one is revealed, the other is not.

The fact that we shall be like him is a matter of faith, but actually to be like him, must be a matter of experience.

The reason assigned why we shall be like him, is the fact that we shall see him as he is.

It is implied here, that seeing him as he is, will exert a transforming influence upon us, to make us like him. This is most positively affirmed by Paul.

"The children of Israel could not steadfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance."

Hence Moses put a veil over his face. "But we all with open face beholding as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory." 2 Cor. iii. 7, 18.

To be like him does not imply equality, but similarity.

After these explanations, let me call your attention to a consideration of the question,

IN WHAT ASPECT WILL THE SAINTS BE LIKE CHRIST, WHEN THEY COME TO SEE HIM AS HE IS?

1. We shall be like him in the fashion of our bodies.

"As we have borne the image of the earthly, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." 1 Cor. xv. 49.

"So also is the resurrection of the dead, It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body." Verses 42-44.

"For our conversation is in heaven, from whence we also look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able to subdue all things unto himself." Phil. iii. 20, 21.

"Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun, in the kingdom of their father." Matt. xiii. 43.

2. We shall be like him in knowledge.

It is not pretended our knowledge will be universal like his, but will be perfect and satisfactory in kind.

There will be no ignorance to lead us astray.

No doubts to distress our minds.

No mysteries to hang their impenetrable clouds across the path of our thoughts.

When we shall see him as he is, we shall see in him an explanation of all that it will be desirable for us to know.

“ Then shall I see, and hear and know,
All I desired or wished below ;
And every hour find sweet employ,
In that eternal world of joy.”

3. We shall be like him in moral character.

Love will be the ruling element of the soul.

Nothing will divide the affections or divert them from God.

Our holiness will be entire.

When we shall see him as he is, every element of moral goodness will shine with such clearness and intensity as to permeate our entire natures, and transform us into his likeness.

Our ideal of perfection will then be reached and realized.

There will then be no physical weakness.

No mental obscurity or shadow.

No moral obliquity, stain or impurity.

4. We shall then be like him in happiness.

We shall never be capable of his infinitude of happiness, but our happiness, like his, will be perfect in kind, and fill our measure.

There will be no cause of unhappiness.

No physical weakness or imperfection leading to bodily suffering.

No mental doubts, solitudes and fears which attend us here.

No moral delinquency, producing the pain of guilt, and fear of punishment.

But there will be positive enjoyment.

Entire satisfaction with the past.

Full satisfaction and contentment with the enjoyment of the present.

Absolute and profound trust for all that is to come.

As he is the source and centre of bliss, to see him as he is, and be like him, will fill us with his communicable happiness.

“ Thou wilt show me the path of life, in thy presence is fullness of joy, at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.” Psal. xvi. 11.

REMARKS.

1. All men have got to meet Christ and see him as he is.

Note, *as he is*, not *as he was*.

"Behold he cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him, and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him." Rev. i. 7.

With impenitent sinners the view will be but a transient one, yet fearful in its result.

It will be to receive their sentence and pass to their destiny.

What sinner has not pierced him ?

With the righteous it will be a solemn, joyful, glorious, and eternal vision.

2. The beatitude of the text is limited to those who are children of God here.

"Now are we the sons of God." Verse 2.

"Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin." Verse 9.

"He that committeth sin is of the devil." Verse 8.

The character settled here will be made manifest before him.

What earnest solicitude should this awaken in regard to our relation to God ?

These earthly scenes are a brief prelude to an eternal state.

3. The subject should inspire zeal, and beget deep longings after heaven.

While in the body we are absent from the Lord.

How poor and cold is this world compared with the presence of Christ ?

SUNDAY SCHOOLS.

BY REV. R. DONKERSLEY.

"And these words which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart. And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children."—DEUT. VI. 6, 7.

PROEM. Gather this from the chapter.

THE PUPILS TO BE INSTRUCTED.

These pupils are : Rational, intelligent, and thinking beings.

They come to us with an almost illimitable capacity for the acquisition of knowledge. You look at a child and there is nothing by which you may determine the extent to which his mind may expand in the present life. Follow that intellect into its eternal state of being, and the only limitation you can place upon its perpetual growth is a limitation only somewhere this side the infinite mind. For ought you know to the contrary, there may be among the children now entrusted to your care, a future statesman, who shall rival Calhoun, Webster, or Brougham. Or, here may be a future President of this Republic, who shall not be inferior to Lincoln, Jackson, Adams or Jefferson, or even Washington. Among the youth gathered here may be a future historian, whose luminous and glowing pages shall excel those of Gibbon, Hume, Macaulay, Prescott, Bancroft, or Abbott. Gathered here from Sabbath to Sabbath may be future preachers, whose sacred eloquence shall thrill the hearts of admiring thousands, with a power surpassing that ever yet felt under the master-strokes of Whitefield, Hall, Summerfield, Beecher, or Spurgeon. Here may be reformers, whose electrifying pulsations shall move among the masses with a power and extent, far beyond that witnessed and felt under the gigantic labors of Luther, Knox, Calvin, or Wesley. Among the girls here assembled may be future authoresses, whose fascinating, instructive, and sanctifying pages shall more than equal those of Hannah Moore, Lydia Sigourney, Sarah J. Hale, or Harriet B. Stowe.

"Some village Hampton, that, with dauntless breast,
The little tyrant of his fields withstood ;
Some mute, inglorious Milton, here may be,
Some Cromwell, guiltless of his country's blood."

They are immortal beings—deathless spirits.

An immortal spark has been lit within them which neither time nor eternity can extinguish. They have begun an existence which must run parallel with the duration of their Creator.

"The stars shall fade, the sun himself
Grow dim with age, and nature sink in years ;
But these shall flourish in immortal youth,
Unhurt amid the war of elements,
The wreck of matter and the crush of worlds."

They are fallen and depraved beings.

"Born in sin, and shapen in iniquity." Their nature must be changed. Their hearts must be renewed by the Spirit and grace of God. This work can be more easily accomplished in youth than in after years. You may bend the sapling, but the sturdy oak defies your utmost muscular efforts. In almost every season of revival, the subjects of saving grace are gathered mostly from the Sabbath school.

We are indebted to Mr. Beecher for the following characteristic illustration.

"Here is a man who wishes to get a shade-tree for this front yard. He takes him out and shows him a most majestic elm, and advises him to move that to his yard. It will make a splendid tree for that place.

'Why,' says the man, with astonishment, 'I can't move that tree, its roots spread over an acre of ground.'

'Well, cut off the roots.'

'But that would kill the tree, unless I cut off as much off the top.'

'Well, cut off the top.'

'But suppose I should cut off the roots and the top, and move it into my yard, what have I then got but a great stump?'

And sure enough, what has he got but a great, ugly stump? The way to get a handsome shade-tree, is to go to the nursery, and get a small tree, so that you can take all the roots up with it, then it will live, and grow, and become a tree of beauty.

So, in bringing persons into the Church, you take a man, and it may be here is one root running off into a grog-shop, another root running into the theatre, and so on. All these roots you must cut off, and when you have pruned him, and got him into the Church, what is he but a mere stump? If you would have a good, symmetrical Christian, you must go to the nursery—to the family and Sabbath school, and take the young plants, the children, and train them up to become plants of righteousness, and ornaments in the house of God.

Some of these children are blessed with pious parents—others of them are not so blessed. In either case, how responsible the duties devolved upon the Sunday School teacher. On the former

supposition, you are called upon to co-operate with those pious parents in efforts to train immortal souls for heaven. On the latter supposition, pious teachers are called upon to supply the lack of religious instruction, and religious training.

Upon the children of the present day, the Church of Christ bases its chief hope for its perpetuation.

Some conjecture as to the material of which shall be built the future Church of the Redeemer may be formed, if we take for our data of judgment, the history of the past. A very large proportion of the present membership of our churches were converted or received their deepest and most abiding religious impressions while members of the Sunday school.

In a certain Sunday school in New England, in 1832, sixty-one out of one hundred and sixty pupils, under sixteen years of age, became hopefully pious. In the same Sunday school, in six classes, embracing seventy-one young persons, over sixteen years of age, sixty made a profession of having passed from death unto life. Rev. Charles Bala, of England, informed the general meeting of the Sunday School Union, in 1813, that throughout the county in which he resided, they received most of the members into the Church from the Sunday school.

REQUISITE QUALIFICATIONS FOR A SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHER.

Personal piety is indispensable.

Nothing can compensate for the absence of this. Rare intellectual abilities—natural and acquired—are valuable ; but, unallied with a regenerated heart they leave their possessor destitute of the most essential requisite for a successful laborer in the Sunday school.

Strong attachment to the young.

All successful Sunday school teachers are earnest lovers of children.

Patience and perseverance.

The deportment of the children will often put the excellent grace of patience to a severe test. Sometimes we may have to wait long ere looking upon the fruit of our labors.

Punctuality in attendance.

Be there at the appointed hour. If impracticable to be there at

all then be sure to procure an efficient substitute. It is hardly possible to magnify the importance of this requisite.

An aptitude to impart instruction in a plain and simple manner.

ADVANTAGES OF SUNDAY SCHOOLS.

Here is an ample and eligible field for the employment of the talent of the church.

Thousands of laborers are needed here. Here, truly, "the harvest is great, but the laborers are few."

The Sunday school is a grand preventive of Sabbath desecration.

President Harrison taught, for several years, in a humble Sunday school, on the banks of the Ohio. The Sabbath before he left home for Washington, to assume the duties of chief magistrate of the nation, he met his Bible-class as usual. And his last counsel on the subject to his gardener, at Washington, it may be hoped, will never be forgotten by the nation. When advised to keep a dog to protect his fruit, he replied, "Rather set a Sunday school teacher to take care of the boys."

Tens of thousands are indebted to the Sunday school for the mere ability to read, and for whatever intellectual culture they have made beyond this.

The Sunday school has created and supplied a valuable literary necessity.

Look at the cheering aggregate, the extended range, and great diversity of our Sunday school literature. Youthful reading, half a century ago, comprised but little more than, The New England Primer, Janeways Token for Children, and Watt's Divine Songs and Hymns. As late as 1826, the American Sunday school Union had but twenty-one publications on its catalogue. But how do matters now stand? That same time-honored institution now presents us with a catalogue of perhaps, eight hundred bound books, most of which have been prepared and published expressly for children and youth. The Sunday School Union of the M. E. Church has some thirteen hundred volumes on its catalogue. Add to these the publications of various other religious denominations, and we shall have a catalogue of Sunday school publications, not less perhaps, than three thousand five hundred volumes of youthful, religious literature. Perhaps it is safe to estimate

the number of volumes in the Sunday schools of Protestantism at not less than 20,000,000. Now let it be supposed that one fifth of this number of books are carried to as many different homes every Sabbath. That in those numerous homes, each is read by four different persons, this would give us a grand aggregate of 16,000,000 of weekly readers of Sunday school books.

To the foregoing estimates must be added Sunday school papers, which have now become quite numerous. During the year 1863, the Sunday School Advocate, published by the M. E. Church, printed and circulated five million three hundred and eighty-two thousand copies.

CLOSING REMARKS.

Let this entire congregation organize itself into a Sunday school.

Parents, give us your hearty co-operation. Come yourselves to the Sunday school, and bring your children with you.

Let the members of this congregation go from house to house, and gather the children into the Sunday school.

Let teachers labor with special reference to the immediate conversion of those entrusted to their spiritual care.

Let all earnestly pray for the Divine blessing upon the Sunday school.

THE WORK OF WINNING SOULS.

"He that winneth souls is wise."—PROV. XI. 30.

Man is a dark wanderer from God.

To reclaim him has engaged the divine mind and powers.

God also employs human agency.

It is of these human agents that the text affirms, "he that winneth souls is wise."

I. What is it to win souls?

1. It is not merely to attach them to ourselves.

This is sometimes done by favor.

We can purchase adherents if we have the means.

It is sometimes done by subjection.

Make men feel that they must adhere to you or suffer, and you will have followers.

2. It is not to attach them to a party or a sect.

This is often done by conforming the party to popular sentiment.

3. To win souls is to attach them to Christ, to make true disciples.

They will then follow Christ.

Not for the loaves and fishes, but from principle, from love.

Not only when he rides into Jerusalem, but when he goes to the cross.

II. To whom does the work of winning souls belong ?

1. It is the special work of ministers, their business, their calling.

2. It should engage the attention of parents.

3. It should engage all christians.

III. By what means are souls to be won ?

1. They need to be enlightened.

To this end the gospel is to be used.

The gospel is full of all needful religious light.

2. They must be awakened, yea, alarmed for their guilt.

There is danger, and they must be made to see and feel it.

To secure this the law must be preached ; the voice of Sinai must be heard.

Sin must be made to appear with its guilt and damning power.

God's threatening must be preached.

3. They must be won, and drawn by the attractions of Christ.

Christ must be presented to the alarmed sinner.

Presented in the tenderness of his love.

In the fullness of his impartial and universal grace.

In the grandeur and glory of his power to save.

IV. Wherein does the wisdom of such as win souls appear ?

1. They are wise in the selection of the object of their efforts.

The enterprise is important.

It promises most good.

Most good to such as win souls.

Most good to souls won.

2. Their success proves their wisdom in their work.

Not so much the wisdom of this world.

Some have been very successful in winning souls, who had but little worldly wisdom.

They were wise in christian experience.

They had the mind of Christ, and were imbued with the Holy Spirit.

REMARKS.

1. Here is an enterprise worthy of the best powers of each and all of us.

The work, successfully performed, will secure riches, honor and happiness.

It is worthy of an angel's powers.

It called out the efforts of the Son of God.

One soul redeemed is worth worlds, and will be a living, everlasting trophy, proclaiming the triumph of grace with the blaze of glory and song of joy.

2. If it be a work of such importance to win souls, it must be fearful not to be won.

Consider all that God has done to win souls.

If it be wisdom to win souls, it must be folly not to be won.

3. Are there any here who will be won by this effort?

How lost will those be, who will not be won by all the efforts put forth to save them.

How soon will all these efforts cease.

THE PROMISES are a cabinet of jewels, and they are as various as they are rich, suited to all the conditions of the Christian. They are the daily bread of God's children. There is Christ and heaven in every promise. "This is mine." They are the trees of life growing in the garden of God's Word, which the Christian may freely pluck and eat.

BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION.

THE ALLEGORICAL MODE OF INTERPRETATION.

The allegorical mode of interpretation is founded upon the assumption that the sacred Scriptures have a double sense, a natural and obvious sense, and an occult or mystical sense. This mode of interpretation is very ancient, having been resorted to by many Jewish writers, as well as by early Christian writers, of whom Orijin may be regarded as standing at the head. He turned a large portion of biblical history into fables, and many of the precepts into allegories. The same or a similar method of interpretation has been resorted to in modern times both by writers and pulpit expositors. What is meant by a double sense will be best explained by an illustration. Take the words of Christ as an illustration, Matt. xi. 5 : "The blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the pöör have the gospel preached to them."

Here is a plain and obvious sense, in the light of which plain and literal facts are affirmed. No figures are used, and not one word is used in a figurative sense. The literally blind were made literally to see ; the literally lame were made literally to walk ; and so of all that is affirmed in the text. That this is the true interpretation is certain from the object of the text, and the connection in which it is found. The object was to prove to John that he was the promised Messiah. "Go and show John the things which ye do see and hear, how that the blind receive their sight," &c. Nothing but the literal works could be seen and heard, and presented as evidence.

This obvious sense all must admit ; there is no room for dispute ; but some will find in the text a second sense ; an occult, mystical, or spiritual sense. According to this second sense, the blind means ignorant sinners, who are enlightened ; the lepers are polluted sinners, who are pardoned and purified ; the lame are helpless sinners, who are made to walk morally or spiritually ; the deaf are sinners whose spiritual ears are heavy, and who are

awakened to hear, that is, give heed to the gospel ; the dead are those dead in sins, as all sinners are, and who are quickened spiritually ; and the poor are sinners who have no merit, but who have the offer of life eternal as a free gift. This may all be true doctrine in itself, but it is not the doctrine of the text ; the text means no such thing. Other texts may teach the whole of it, but this does not. Many a truthful sermon has been preached from texts which contained no such truth as was found in the sermon ; the sermon is often true in itself, while it is false as an exposition of the text from which it is pretended to be drawn.

The literal sense is undeniable, and it is a settled principle, no word, and no combination of words can have two meanings at the same time and in the same place. Words have two senses, a primary or literal sense, and a secondary or a figurative sense ; and when they are used in their literal sense, they are not used in a figurative sense ; and when they are used in a figurative sense, they are not used in a literal sense. They are never used in a literal and figurative sense at the same time, and in the same place.

It may be asked, if it is then an offense against the truth to to spiritualize the above text, as it is called, and as it has many a time been treated. If it is given as the true sense of the text, it is surely an offense against the truth. It is a fact not to be denied, that in many other texts, blindness, infirmity, sickness, death, and even poverty, are employed, figuratively, to denote the condition of sinners.

Now, in view of this fact, should a preacher take the text under consideration, and first give its true sense, and then proceed to apply it in an accommodated sense, to the condition of sinners and their recovery under the gospel, it would not be a serious offense against the rule of propriety. But to call it an accommodated sense, is to admit that the text contains no such sense in itself. Accommodation, in theology, is the application of a passage to something not originally intended, on the simple ground of analogy or resemblance.

In another article, we shall state some of the principal objections to the system of interpretation, which gives to the Scriptures a double sense.

AN EFFICIENT MINISTRY.

In number VIII., we published an article entitled, *The Christian Ministry*, in which we showed the ministry to be of divine appointment, and noticed its important and comprehensive work, that upon its success depends the happiness of individuals, of our nation, and of the world. It may be profitable to inquire what constitutes an efficient ministry. Several things are necessary to give efficiency, but we shall obtain a more impressive view, if we take a distant view of each requisite by itself, before attempting to grasp the combination.

We say then, first of all, that the minister should be earnestly and exclusively devoted to his calling. He must not only feel its importance, but he must love the work, for the sake of Him who has called him to it, and for the sake of the end proposed to be secured by it. We have sometimes been shocked, to hear ministers tell how they disliked to preach, how unwilling they were to preach, and how they resisted their impressions of duty on the subject. If they are to be believed, they perform an unwilling duty when they preach; and preach, not because they have a love for the work, or disposition that loves to do the will of God, but because they are afraid of going to hell. Is there not rebellion in the heart of such? Are they not fighting against God? Do they appreciate the character and love of Christ, who has called them to preach his gospel. How unlike the temper of St. Paul is this. He says, "I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry." Can such men labor with the same power and efficiency as they would, if their hearts were enflamed with a love for the work? We cannot see how they can.

But there must not only be a love for the work of the ministry, but it must have free scope, and be allowed to direct all the powers of the man in the one undivided calling. Few men, perhaps no man, can be truly in earnest and really efficient in a variety of pursuits at the same time. The ministry presents work enough to employ both mind and body, and absorb all their powers. Let one question be asked. Suppose a minister to be so circumstanced, as to enable him to devote all his time to his

calling, suppose him to have nothing to do but to study, read, meditate, pray, preach, and visit the people; will he not find enough to occupy his heart, and his head, and his hands, and all his time? Suppose then that he is cumbered with the cares of this world, that he devotes half his time to a farm, or that he is some kind of a tradesman, which occupies half or two-thirds of his time, will he have time and strength enough left to fill the measure of a minister? Surely not, if he had no time and strength to spare when wholly devoted to the work.

But such diversion from the ministry to worldly pursuits, not only consumes time and strength, but must diminish the intensity of feeling, and detract from the mental and moral force and power. The mind cannot be excited in several different directions at the same time; there must be but one thing before the mind to produce intensity of excitement, and he who is devoted to a number of pursuits, cannot be very earnestly devoted to any of them. To be an efficient minister, the whole man should be engaged in the work, the intellect should labor over the wonderful theme of redemption, and grasp the mighty truths, into which angels desire to look; the heart should glow, and burn with desire for the salvation of souls, and that desire should be the ruling passion of the mind. The love of ease, the love of gain, and the love of popularity, must all be subordinated to the one great object of the Christian ministry, which is to bring lost sinners to the knowledge and enjoyment of eternal life in Christ Jesus. Let the desires be divided and distracted between the ministry and worldly pursuits, let the powers of the mind undertake to grasp and hold and wield the ministry of reconciliation and the machinery of this world for gathering its wealth and fame, and there can be but little efficiency, but let the whole man be devoted to the one work of saving souls, and under God, something will be done.

TRUTH in theory, and correct forms of worship, are very important, but they must not be relied upon to save ourselves, or to enable us to save others, without the living fire of devotion in the heart.

THE UNDERSTANDING AND CONSCIENCE.

With a minister the question is, how he may most effectually move his hearers to that which is good. If he be skilled, he may please and excite them through their imaginations, but such impressions are not abiding. The most abiding impressions are made through their understandings, and consciences. The understanding must be reached first. He should be able to address the understanding with clearness ; to extend and perfect their moral vision ; to throw light upon the sacred Scriptures ; to assist their hearers in repelling those doubts which too often shake their convictions in regard to christian truth ? and to establish them in a firm and rational faith.

The minister who can thus address the understandings of his hearers, can, through their understandings, also reach their consciences. When the conscience is reached through the understanding, and is addressed with power, the end of preaching is likely to be gained, the impression is likely to be deep, controlling, and lasting. It is in this way that men must be roused from an unreflecting life, and have their affections engaged on the side of duty.

THE WORTH OF THE SOUL.

All the works and inventions and arts of men, testify to the worth of the soul. The capacity of the soul to endure woe and enjoy happiness is as great as its power to do, and equally testifies to its value. Its price is the blood of the Incarnate One, and its value must be corresponding. Tell me, lost spirit, under thy weight of unending woe ; tell me glorified one in thy fullness of immortal bliss ; tell me angels ; but tell me, thou who only art able, thou bleeding Lamb, tell me the worth of the soul. Calvary is the stand-point from which I see the true value of the soul ; it is only by looking to Jesus that I learn its worth.

LEARN HOW TO THINK.

Ministers need to learn how to think, as a means of knowing what to think. It is more important to know how to think, than it is to load the memory with the thoughts of others. He who has acquired the art of thinking for himself, has thereby secured the power of thinking correctly. He who has only loaded his mind with the thoughts of others, has not only to trust to the correctness of their thoughts, but must wait for their thoughts on every new subject, before he dares to express a thought himself.

IMPROVE TIME.

Ministers have no time to waste or spend on trifling objects, much less to devote to folly. Spend your time in nothing, which is sure afterwards to demand repentance. Spend your time in nothing upon which you cannot ask the blessing of your heavenly Father. Spend it in nothing which can cause you regret and pain when you come to lie upon your dying bed. Spend it in nothing in which you would be afraid to be overtaken by death.

Time is short, improve every moment. Time is pregnant with eternal results, improve it well.

He who would persuade men to walk in the path of duty and piety, must be seen walking in it himself. It will not avail to point the right way, if we are seen walking the wrong way. We have heard of a minister who used to say to his people, "Do as I say, and not as I do." Such might be good advice, but it would be without power.

THE CONDITION OF OUR DISCIPLESHIP.

"If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me."—MATT. XVI. 24.

There is no neutrality between God and the devil, between Christ and the world.

All are on one side or the other.

Every person in this assembly, is, this moment, for Christ or against him.

And which side each is on, is plain to the All-seeing eye.

We may deceive one another by false professions, but we cannot deceive the Master.

It is an open, honest, decisive christian life demanded in the text, by which alone we can give sufficient proof of our discipleship.

The expression, "If any man will come after me," means, if any man will be my disciple, will embrace my religion, let him show his honesty and earnestness, by denying himself, taking up his cross, and following me.

We have here clearly stated the conditions of discipleship.

They are three in number, as follows :

I. LET HIM DENY HIMSELF.

To deny ourselves is to be governed by the will of God, in opposition to our own wills and desires.

Self denial stands opposed to living for our own selfish ends.

Self denial does not comprehend the doctrine of penance, as taught and practiced by the Roman church.

It is not self-inflicted torture, but a refraining from wicked or hurtful gratifications.

It simply requires us to deny ourselves what God forbids.

Who has not felt his own propensities and appetites struggling to overleap the bounds of propriety, and the law of right?

Some have to deny themselves in one direction and some in another.

Some have to deny their avaricious, selfish propensity to maintain common honesty, to say nothing about benevolence.

Some have to deny their bodily appetites to maintain health and moral purity.

Some have to deny their propensity to anger, wrath and improper speech.

Some have to deny their propensity to be arbitrary and overbearing.

Some have to deny their pride, which clamors for indulgence in pomposity and vain display.

I say nothing against the substantial comforts, conveniences, decencies, and even refinements of life, but there is with some classes, more sacrificed to the goddess of vanity, than is given in response to all the claims of life.

"Let him deny himself," is the command of the Master.

II. LET HIM TAKE UP HIS CROSS.

This is a figurative expression, borrowed from the criminal jurisprudence of those barbarous times.

Criminals condemned to death upon the cross, were required to carry their own cross to the place of execution.

The cross was a burden to be borne.

It was a disgrace to be endured, mortifying to the feelings.

It was an instrument of death.

In view of the crucifixion of Christ, by which his death upon the cross became the vital truth of his religion, and the cross on which he died, the ensign of its profession, a reproach upon the lips of his enemies, and the rallying watch-word of his followers, it was natural for him to transfer the cross, by a bold and expressive figure, to the gospel vocabulary, to denote the labors, trials, burdens, reproaches and sufferings of christians.

The cross of the christian is just what each, in his circumstances, will have to do, bear and suffer in consequence of an open and fearless profession of the christian faith, and performance of all christian duties.

The cross is sometimes presented in the form of unpleasant duties to be performed.

It is sometimes presented in the form of personal sacrifices to be made for the support of the cause of Christ.

It is sometimes presented in the form of persecution, reproach and suffering to be borne.

It has often been presented to christians in the shape of death itself.

Such is the cross of Christ, which all must take up and bear.

The cross does not consist in Romish penance, in self-inflicted torture.

It does not consist in making ourselves trouble for the sake of trouble.

It does not consist in doing things merely to be opposed.

It consists in doing just what is required of us in the Scriptures, regardless of what the world may think, say or do in consequence.

III. LET HIM FOLLOW ME.

To follow Christ, is to obey his commands, and to imitate his example.

To follow him is to be like him, by embracing his views, imbibing his disposition and temper of mind, and living after his life as our model.

We must follow him.

1. By imitating his humility.

He was meek and lowly of heart.

2. Follow him by practicing after the example of his benevolence.

Consider well his sacrifice for the good of others.

He gave himself a ransom for all.

3. Follow Christ by practicing his fidelity.

In every relation he sustained, he responded to the obligations resting upon him.

4. Follow Christ in his disposition, practice, and spirit of devotion.

He was always present at the place and hour of worship.

His private devotion was frequent and deep.

5. Follow Christ by imitating his firmness.

He could be neither flattered, bought, nor driven from the path of duty.

6. Follow Christ by imitating his patience.

We need only to review his life and death to feel the power of his example of patience.

See him pleading for God and truth amid the contradictions

of sinners, with vile tricks and traps laid around him to catch him.

See him in the garden of his agony.

See him in the palace of the high priest.

See him at Pilate's judgment bar.

See him on the cross.

Thus he lived and thus he died ; he who says, " If any man will come after me let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow me."

REMARKS.

1. How many of us really bear the marks of discipleship ?

An attempt to answer this question is to make up an opinion in our own case which may be partial.

Suppose our lives, and the rules, were submitted to some impartial stranger from another world, to compare and report the agreement or disagreement, what would that report be ?

2. How many are there, who, like Peter, follow Christ a great way off ?

In the course of the Saviour's ministry, while his cause was gathering strength, and popularity appeared to be turning in his favor, Peter was always forward and prompt.

When Christ appeared to be overtaken in an hour of weakness, and overcome, and was being led away bound by his enemies, Peter followed a great way off.

How many Peters have we among us ?

To be true followers of Christ, we need that degree of faith and attachment, which will not only go with the multitude when he rides in triumph into Jerusalem, but which will impel us to the rescue of his cause in the day of defeat and darkness.

3. Are there any who will now arise and follow Christ ?

O, ye, who are wandering in ways that are not good, ye who are lingering spell-bound upon the borders of destruction, let me say, " The Master is come and calleth for thee," arise and come away.

WONDERFUL WORDS OF GRACE.

"And all bear him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth."—LUKE IV. 22

These words describe the immediate effect of Christ's first great sermon in his native town.

The text was in the prophecy of Isaiah, and as it is here rendered reads thus :

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor ; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord." Verse 18, 19.

The sermon is not given, the subject of it only is stated, in these words :

"And he began to say unto them, this day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears."

This, doubtless, was his first remark, and the sermon consisted of an application of the prophecy to himself, with the necessary explanations to show its fulfillment in him.

It is, no doubt, with reference to these unrecorded explanations, that it is said, "All bear him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth."

THE GOSPEL OFFER OF SALVATION, THROUGH CHRIST, MAY APPROPRIATELY BE REGARDED AS WONDERFUL WORDS OF GRACE.

1. The subjects to whom the offer of salvation is made, renders the offer a gracious wonder.

Man in his guilt is the subject.

The view is heightened by the expressive figures employed to represent man in the thralldom of sin, from which the gospel proclaims deliverance through Christ.

"He hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor.

"He hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted.

"To preach deliverance to the captives.

"The recovering of sight to the blind.

"To set at liberty them that are bruised."

What a work of grace to walk among such classes of the wretched, and breathe liberty, health and peace upon all.

2. The mode of developement renders the gospel offer of salvation a wonder of grace.

The point upon which I would fix your attention here, is the sufferings and death of Christ, as a wonderful display of divine love and mercy.

"God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son." John iii. 16.

The sufferings which he endured, and the death which he died, proclaim the wonder of the grace which made the sacrifice for guilty sinners.

Of the finishing of the work of redemption, by the resurrection of Christ, the poet appropriately sings,

"On this glad day a brighter scene
Of glory was displayed,
By God, th' eternal Word, than when
This universe was made.
He rises, who mankind has bought,
With grief and pain extreme;
'Twas great to speak a world from nought,
But greater to redeem."

3. The comprehensiveness, and fulness of the gospel offer of salvation, renders it a gracious wonder.

The gracious words are for all.

For every age of the world, from the dark day upon which Adam fell, until the time when the angel, standing upon the sea and the land, shall swear that time shall be no longer.

For every land marked by the foot-prints of humanity.

For every class of sinners, of every degree.

"Come, sinners, to the gospel feast,
Let every soul be Jesus' guest,
Ye need not one be left behind,
For God hath bidden all mankind.
Come all ye souls by sin oppressed,
Ye restless wand'ers after rest;
Ye poor and maim'd, and halt and blind,
In Christ a hearty welcome find."

4. The immediate applicability and availableness of the gospel offer of salvation, renders it a gracious wonder.

It offers present grace and salvation.

"This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears," said the Saviour.

All false religions require a long time, and a tedious process to come at the enjoyment of salvation.

The gospel is available in a moment.

On condition of the simple exercise of faith, the guilt of sin is blotted out, and peace and joy fill the heart.

God, who said, "Let there be light, and there was light," can as soon kindle a light in a sinner's heart.

5. The exceeding greatness of the benefit offered, renders the gospel offer a wonder of grace.

Salvation from sin here is a wonder of wonders.

There is no greater wonder than the real reformation and salvation of an abandoned sinner, such as we have all sometimes seen.

Salvation from the fear of death, the power of the grave, and damnation of hell, is a wonder to more worlds than one.

The bestowment of crowns of life and glory on worms of earth, is a wonder which rises above all other wonders, and will remain an ever-increasing wonder in eternity.

Other wonders cease to be wonders, or are forgotten amid greater wonders that rise around us.

This will, as a wonder of grace, ever increase through all the successive developments of eternity.

REMARKS.

1. These gracious developments of the gospel are no less calculated in themselves to excite wonder, than they were when they proceeded out of the Saviour's mouth, in the synagogue at Nazareth.

We are less moved by them, because we have become so familiar with the theme.

They are no less wonderful now than they were when enraptured angels sung the advent song, than when the Nazarenes bore him witness and wondered, than when earth grew dark and groaned and quaked with the pangs of his death, or than when

heaven triumphed, and hell was stricken with terror at his resurrection.

You may now be wondering at the conduct of the Nazarenes in rejecting him, after wondering at his gracious words, but you had better wonder at yourselves.

You have heard all these gracious words, and have not wondered at them, and some even have not had their attention arrested.

You have thrust him out, and cast him down the precipice by your conduct.

2. These wonderful works of grace, if slighted and unheeded, will not continue always to be spoken in the sinner's ear.

What Christ said at Nazareth, is true here to-day, "This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears;" Christ is preached to you, and the wonderful words of his salvation are proclaimed in your ears.

How long have these words been spoken in vain.

How much longer shall they fall upon leaden ears?

Continue to slight them and there will soon come a last time, and with some this hour may echo with the last offer of these gracious words.

"They now demand your care,
They now should be pursued,
Lest, slighted once, the season fair
Should never be renewed."

To insure the right result, we must listen to these gracious words immediately.

Let me then expostulate with you.

Why will you slight the offers of mercy?

Is mercy so cheap that you spurn it?

Is there nothing in this world's destiny to attract your attention and awaken an interest?

Is this world so much brighter than heaven, that its momentary vision blinds you from seeing eternal glory?

Is there more music in the winds of earth that whistle the changes of human fortune by the day and by the hour, than in the voice of mercy, and in the songs that celebrate redemption in strains of joy that shall never die?

Do you enjoy enough in this life to hold you spell-bound from seeking after heaven ?

Has Christ no charms for you, and does he spread his arms and call in vain ?

"To-day the Saviour calls,
Ye wand'ers come ;
O ye benighted souls,
Why longer roam ?

The Spirit strives to-day.
Yield to its power :
O grieve it not away,
'Tis mercy's hour."

A STATE OF PERFECT PEACE.

"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee."—ISA.
xxvi. 3.

This life is a constant scene of warfare and restless strife.

Disappointments, troubles, and painful solicitudes attend us from life's opening struggle to its final close.

For these evils there is no preventive. Under them there is but one source of relief, one sufficient support, and that is to stay our minds upon God.

"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee."

The text suggests two leading thoughts.

I. What is it to stay our minds upon God ?

II. In what sense will God keep such in perfect peace, as stay their minds upon him ?

I. What is it to stay our minds upon God ?

To stay, in the sense of the text, is to rest, to rely, to confide in, to trust.

It includes the idea of forbearing to look further, and of stopping where we are, with a sense of security and satisfaction.

Thus to stay upon God, supposes

1. A renunciation of every other dependence.

The world must be renounced as insufficient and delusive.

Self-reliance must be given up, and all our works abandoned, as a ground of acceptance with God, as in no sense meritorious.

All the forms and subtifuges of error must be abandoned.

The language of the soul must be,

“ Could my tears forever flow,
 Could my zeal no longer know,
 These for sin could not atone :
 Thou must save and thou alone :
 In my hand no price I bring,
 Simply to thy cross I cling.”

2. There must be some clear views, and a proper appreciation of the character of God.

We cannot properly stay ourselves upon God, only so far as we have correct views of his character.

Sinners slander God by their false views of his character.

They are at war with his justice, and regard his law as arbitrary and vindictive.

Nothing less than God's law, as it is, could secure the highest interests of the moral universe.

To require less than God does of sinners, would be to abandon them to everlasting ruin.

God is a gracious parent, good unto all.

3. There must be full credit given to God's word and promises.

The Scriptures contain the only clear revelation we have of the will, purposes, and promises of God.

It is through this word, and these promises, that we may stay ourselves upon God.

4. There must be entire submission to God's government and providence.

We cannot stay our minds upon God, while our hearts rebel against his government.

We cannot rest upon God, unless we regard his providence as universal, supreme, and righteous.

5. We must personally trust God for salvation, in and through Christ. No cold and merely speculative faith will save us.

We must stay upon him in full faith, as Paul says, “ Let us draw nigh in full assurance of faith.”

II. In what sense will God keep those in perfect peace, whose minds are stayed on him ?

1. Let us consider the nature of this peace.

Peace is not ecstasy, but only peace.

Peace is a state of mind in which security and tranquility are blended.

It implies the following conditions.

Freedom from personal injury.

We may appear to endure temporary or partial wrong, but no ultimate evil can befall those whose minds are stayed on God.

“All things work together for good to them that love God.”

Freedom from fear of evil.

Such as are not stayed upon God, are afraid continually ; conscious guilt creates fear.

The guilty are afraid of God.

They are often afraid of men, “The wicked flee when no man pursueth.”

Freedom from disturbing war of angry and other evil passions.

Under the reigning peace of God in the soul, evil passions are held at bay ; they are restrained, if not destroyed.

Freedom from painful solicitude.

The cares of this life are made light by firmly trusting in divine Providence.

2. Let us notice the source of this peace.

God is its author and source.

“Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace.”

It depends upon the keeping of God.

This places it upon a sure basis ; it rests upon the rock of divinity.

The hand that holds creation up, is the same hand that keeps the saints.

The expression, “Thou wilt keep him,” implies an ever present active agency.

The mind that is stayed upon God may sing,

“While thou art intimately nigh,
Who, who shall violate my rest?
Sin, earth and hell, I now defy ;
I lean upon my Saviour's breast.”

3. Let us, in conclusion, notice the perfection of this peace.

"Thou wilt keep him in *perfect* peace."

The Hebrew is, "peace, peace;" giving the sense of, "peace upon peace."

This peace is perfect in several aspects.

Perfect in kind, being spiritual in its nature, peace of mind.

It may prevail amid outward war, strife and danger.

To such the poet refers.

"Lord, how secure and blest are they,
Who feel the joys of pardoned sin;
Should storms of wrath shake earth and sea,
Their minds have peace and heaven within."

Perfect in relation to the real objects of fear and alarm.

It is "peace with God." Rom. v. 1.

Peace with ourselves, peace within.

Peace with all men.

Perfect in its fulness, and constant flow.

"Great peace have they that love thy law, and nothing shall offend them." Psal. cxix. 165.

"Oh that thou hadst hearkened unto my commandments! then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea." Isa. xlviii. 18.

A river denotes sufficiency and durability.

REMARKS.

1. How small is the enjoyment of christians, in view of the rich provisions of the gospel.

Some can hardly be said to enjoy peace.

Others only enjoy a slight and transient peace, between intervals of doubts, fears, excitements, and storms of passion.

How few enjoy constant and undisturbed peace.

Too many are thirsting amid fountains, and starving in a land of plenty.

2. Sinners are destitute of the peace of which the text affirms.

"The wicked are like the troubled sea when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace saith my God to the wicked." Isa. xlvii. 20, 21.

They may dream of peace, but it is like the peace of one who sleeps in his frail boat, rushing with the current to the cataract of ruin.

They will soon have their peace broken by the surges of death.

“For refuge fly;
The storm of vengeance falls,
Ruin is nigh.”

3. As a closing remark, let me say, in the name of God, I tender to every one who hears me, this peace, on the reasonable terms of the gospel.

If you forsake sin, let go of the world, and stay your minds upon God, he will keep you in perfect peace.

Come anxious and troubled professor, and find rest to your soul.

Come, poor backslider, return to the source of peace, and be at ease.

Come, sinner, let your sins and the world go, and find peace in trusting God.

Come, all, God alone is worthy of your confidence? he only can give you peace here, and salvation hereafter.

Every thing else is uncertain, and every other trust must fail.

A thousand anxieties trouble you, doubts hang over thy pathway, and fears arise on every hand.

Fly to God as your only safe refuge, and take hold upon his covenant.

Why will you travel in the land of fears, and carry burdens?

“Why should this anxious load
Press down your weary mind?
O seek your heavenly Father's face,
And peace and comfort find.

SELF-CONSECRATION TO GOD.

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.”—ROM. XII. 1.

The argument of this entire epistle closed with the preceding chapter.

It presents an outline of the whole plan of human redemption, with all the fundamental doctrines involved.

Having established the theory, the apostle commences an application.

The first great practical duty, all comprehensive in its nature, is urged in the text.

The word, therefore, denotes that what follows, is a conclusion drawn from what has preceded.

The theme suggested by the text, is,
SELF-CONSECRATION TO GOD.

I. The nature of this all-comprehensive consecration to God.

1. It is a presentation of ourselves to God.

We must bring ourselves to God as Jews brought their offerings.

We must offer ourselves to God.

It must be our own free-will offering.

2. It is our bodies we are to offer.

The mind or heart is required to offer the body.

This implies the devotedness of the heart.

The whole man therefore constitutes the offering.

The body is named, and the whole body must be presented.

The hand and foot, the ear and eye.

3. It must be a living sacrifice.

Living animals only could be brought as sacrifices.

But they were slain and offered dead.

We offer ourselves alive, and consecrate all the active powers of life to God.

He who offered a sacrifice renounced all claim to it.

So we have no right to ourselves, after having presented ourselves to God.

4. We must present ourselves holy.

Without blemish or defect ; no animal could be offered that was deformed or defective.

So must we present ourselves entirely, perfectly, all the powers we possess ; not the feebleness of sickness, nor time which we can make no other use of, nor yet old age alone.

Sacred to God, devoted to God, pure, free from blemish.

5. We must present ourselves to God acceptably.

Such a sacrifice as God can and will accept.

Such an one as has been described.

The sense is, offer such a sacrifice that it may be acceptable to God.

II. The ground of the obligation we are under to thus consecrate ourselves to God.

1. It is demanded upon the ground of the mercies of God.

Mercy is favor shown to the underserving.

Upon its exercise depends our existence with all attendant blessings.

Redemption in Christ Jesus.

All temporal blessings.

The mercies we enjoy are but a link in a chain extending from Adam to us.

These mercies demand our entire devotedness to God.

2. This consecration to God is but our reasonable service.

Eternal reason demands it. Human reason demands it.

It is in perfect harmony with the sinner's own convictions of what is right and proper.

There is nothing so unreasonable as sin.

Nothing more reasonable than the service of God.

3. Such a sacrifice of ourselves is acceptable to God.

Nothing less can be acceptable.

It is the only thing we can do, which God will or can accept.

Present yourselves, or make no offering to God.

Paul besought men to make this reasonable offering.

I feel bound to imitate him.

How strange it is that men need to be besought to do so reasonable a thing.

It should be done immediately.

APOSTOLIC PREACHING.

BY REV. R. DONKERSLEY.

"And I, brethren, when I came unto you, came not with excellency of speech,"
 &c.—1 COR. II. 1.

PROEM. St. Paul was a model preacher. Either as to matter, spirit or manner, he may safely be held forth as an example for

all christian preachers, throughout all coming time. The nearer the modern preacher approaches this standard, the nearer he reaches unto perfection in his sacred calling.

In this example we have before us a man of rare natural mental vigor, a ripe scholar, a genuine christian, a zealous disciple of the despised Nazarene, a profound logician, a fervid, fearless, untiring and successful preacher of the gospel of reconciliation.

The chapter before us reveals the man. Here stands forth with great prominence, his mission, his purpose, his spirit, from the day, when, as an awakened sinner he cries out, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" until the eventful moment when he exclaims, "I am now ready to be offered, the time of my departure is at hand."

Our text and context, which seem to have been written but a short time prior to the decease of the great apostle of the Gentiles, constitutes an appeal to the Church at Corinth, as to the manner in which he had ever set before them the "gospel of the grace of God." "And I brethren," &c.

TOPIC. THE MANNER OF APOSTOLIC PREACHING.

"Not with excellency of speech," &c.

We are not to understand St. Paul in this place as disclaiming against the use of good, sound, or even elegant language. Whatever we are favored with from his pen, either in the epistolary form, or in portions of his sermons, is against such supposition. Nothing irregular, faulty, ungrammatical, or un-rhetorical ever proceeded, so far as we can ascertain, either from his tongue or his pen.

Nor are we to understand the apostle here as denouncing true wisdom in those who preach the gospel.

There is a certain kind of wisdom which he here reprobates. He would have us understand that a distinction must be made between that which is improperly regarded as wisdom, and that which truly deserves the name of wisdom. "We speak wisdom among them that are perfect, yet not the wisdom of this world." No man, called of God to preach the gospel, can possess too much true wisdom, natural or acquired. Had St. Paul lived in our day, he would have ranked among the most zealous advocates of ministerial education.

In this Scripture the apostle has allusion to the heathen sages who were designated "lovers of wisdom," and were accustomed to give the people all the instruction they received. The amount of time those sages spent in preparing their speeches and orations is almost incredible. Great exactness was observed in placing their words. Their sentences were constructed in the most curious and ingenious manner. e. g. Plato's work on the "Nature of Justice," begins with a sentence which must have cost him several hours to place aright. It is but a brief sentence, but the words which compose it, according to the testimony of his friends, were written, and re-written many times, placing them in all manner of ways, which that language admitted of, almost above any other language, until he had found the one that pleased his ear.

Another of their most polished writers took ten, some say fifteen years to compose an oration which yet remains, but which, altogether, is not worth three sentences in St. Paul's writings.

With such super-eminence of speech St. Paul did not come to the Corinthians. Among the reasons for disdaining such superfluous literary toil, it is, perhaps, safe to assign the following :

It would have been none other than preaching himself.

The public teachers among the Greeks were thirsty for human applause ; and hence, to please the ear, and to excite the admiration of their auditory, was their one sole object and aim. To this grovelling object all their studies were directed.

St. Paul could not stoop to such folly and sin. The honor which cometh from man he dared not to seek, but that which cometh from God only. Hence we hear him saying, "So we speak, not as pleasing men, but as pleasing God, who trieth our hearts." "We preach not ourselves," &c. "We have this treasure in earthen vessels," &c.

His time was too precious to admit of such nicety of elaboration.

Allowing, as we believe, that St. Paul was competent for the performance of that which he denounced, what must have become of the imperilled souls of men during the time which would have been employed in the preparation of those splendid orations ? The necessity for the application of the gospel, then as now, was urgent, and admitted not of such waste of time. Would the phy-

sician hesitate, and spend unnecessary time in putting his prescriptions into elegant language, when the case was one of life or death?

That the success of his labors might redound to the glory of God.

Had the apostle preached after the pattern of those vain teachers, to whom he alludes, the triumphs of Christianity might have been ascribed to the over-powering eloquence of the preacher. But, preaching as he did, the glory thereof was awarded to God. "So then neither is he that planteth anything, nor he that watereth, but God, that giveth the increase."

He preached thus that the most illiterate might clearly understand him.

Our Saviour's joyous exclamation was, "The poor have the gospel preached unto them." But, he preaches not the gospel to the poor and to the illiterate who preaches it in the use of such language, imagery, or illustration as is beyond their comprehension.

Because of the character of his message.

"Declaring unto you the testimony of God." The importance of this message swallowed up all considerations of personal aggrandizement, human applause, or what else. When a man tells his neighbor that he is in mortal and immediate peril, and warns him to flee for his life, his language will, no doubt, be striking and forcible, but it will not be studied and precise. Under such circumstances, not a moment's consideration will be bestowed as to whether the language is according to the rules of grammar, rhetoric or elocution.

REMARKS.

Let us not sit as critics over the preacher, but listen to the weighty message which he brings to us.

Should we criticise the language, style, or tone in which a lawyer read a will in which ourselves were largely interested?

Have all whom we now address correctly understood, firmly believed, and cordially received the gospel message of saving grace?

BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION.

THE ALLEGORICAL MODE OF INTERPRETATION.

Having explained the allegorical or double sense theory of interpretation, it only remains to state some of the principal objections to it.

1. As the Scriptures are silent in regard to a double sense, if more than one sense be allowed, there is no rule which restricts interpreters to two meanings, and there may be three, four or as many as imagination may see fit to create, which must destroy all confidence in the Scriptures, as teaching anything specifically.

2. The double sense theory discards all the settled rules for the interpretation of language. It disregards all the admitted laws of language. No other book, composition or discourse, is pretended to contain a double sense. The Bible is the only book to which the double sense theory is pretended to be applied, and hence, when men interpret the Scriptures upon this theory, they abandon all the known laws of language, and interpret without rules, and may develop any sense which fancy can create. Making the Scriptures an exception to all the known laws of language, which are applied in the interpretation of all other compositions, cannot be justified. As a revelation from God, the Scriptures may be supposed to transcend the productions of uninspired minds, so far as the matter is concerned, but the manner of communication does not therefore differ; the truth, though divine, was committed in the use of the same language in which all other communications were made among the same people at the same time; and hence, must be subject to the same laws of language, and the same rules of interpretation. It is impossible to see how the Scriptures otherwise can be a revelation from God. A revelation must be made in a language which men have been accustomed to, and which they understand, or they could have no key to it, and would not be able to find out its meaning, and if they could not understand it, it would be no revelation, for it would reveal nothing to them. But if a revelation be made in a language which men already understand, it must be interpreted according to the rules of that language, and there is no language, and never was a language, the laws of which

allow of more than one meaning to the same words, at the same time, and in the same relation. It must then follow that the usual laws of language must be applied in the interpretation of the Scriptures, or else that they make no proper revelation of the will of God to us, unless it be maintained that we have divinely inspired interpreters, which cannot be pretended.

3. If the fact of an occult or hidden sense were allowed, we possess no known and certain means of finding out what it is.

The commonly understood meaning of words, and the common rules of interpretation, cannot help us to the occult or hidden sense, because these are repudiated by the very assumption that there is such a sense, not expressed by the natural force of the language. This drives us again upon the ground stated above, that in view of such a hidden sense, we must have inspired interpreters, or we can have no reliable interpretation. If there be a sense which the natural force of the language does not express, according to the known laws of language, without inspiration, we have no means of finding out what it is, and can only guess at it, and each will be at liberty to make his own guess, and one guess will be just as reliable as another.

4. The theory of a double sense, must tend greatly to unsettle confidence in the Scriptures as teaching anything with certainty, and furnish occasion for the enemies of religion to treat them with contempt, as they often do. Unbelievers charge christians with believing and trusting to a book which is full of mysteries and double meanings, and which is subject to no settled rules of interpretation, enabling every one to understand it according to his own desires or fancy. It is certainly to be regretted that the professed friends of the Scriptures should give occasion for such charges, as they often have, by rejecting all just rules of interpretation, and bring out construction, far fetched and fanciful.

In conclusion, the Scriptures are to be construed upon the same principles of any other document, that which is literal must be interpreted as literal, that which is metaphorical as metaphorical, that which is parabolical as parabolical, and that which is symbolical as symbolical, and the natural sense which the language appears to carry upon its face is to be regarded as the true sense.

AN EFFICIENT MINISTRY.

We know of no way of promoting our own efficiency in the ministry, better than by an earnest attempt to imitate the great pattern, the great teacher, the Master.

Christ was the first minister of his own gospel, and in him we find a perfect model. Ministers will succeed in proportion as they imitate him, become like him. Let us glance at his ministerial character and labors.

His industry is worthy of notice. He was always active, and embraced every opportunity to reveal the truth and to impress it upon the hearts around him. He did not, like too many modern preachers, overlook incidental opportunities to do good, and reserve himself and his talent for exhibition on great occasions ; he was always ready for his work, and always found work to do. If public duties occupied him too closely to give time for private devotion, he found an hour for that object before day, while the rest of the world slumbered ; and when special grace was needed to meet the demands of his mission, he continued all night in the mountain in prayer, and returned to the temple in the morning to teach the people. Every moment of his time was turned to an important account, for everything he said and did was important. Having arrived at the house of Martha and Mary, before the entertainment to which he had been invited was ready, he filled up the time with instruction, so full of interest, that he drew Mary off from the cares of this world, and held her spell-bound at his feet, occupied with the alone thought of catching the gracious words that fell from his lips. When in his journey he became weary, and sat down by Jacob's well to rest while his disciples went into the city to purchase food, he filled up his moments of rest by preaching that wonderful sermon to the Samaritan woman, which, in its consequences, brought the light of the gospel to the whole city.

The manner of Christ's preaching is no less worthy of attention than his industry. He was not the cold hearted philosopher, pouring forth cold moonbeams of intellectual light upon unstirred hearts ; he was the compassionate Saviour, his preaching was

the out-breathing of a soul full of love. While as a preacher, a teacher, he was the very personification of reason ; as a pastor, he was the incarnation of love, and wept over the flock when he saw them as sheep scattered without a shepherd. No one trait in his character as a preacher, appears more conspicuous than his faithfulness to truth. This appears, not only in his uttering truth and nothing but truth, but more particularly, in his uttering, on every occasion, the plain undisguised truth which the time and circumstances called for. His address to every class of his hearers, respectively, was direct to their understanding and consciences, as they appeared to his all-seeing eye, which looked through all outside professions. Where darkness shrouded the heart, his words were like sunbeams, and penetrated the benighted soul. When penitence broke the heart, and filled the mind with grief, his lips dropped with mercy and consolation, and his authoritative word pronounced a pardon upon the guilty. But when the self-conceited, hypocritical, rotten-hearted scribe and Pharisee appeared before him to speculate and mock at the solemn truths he uttered, he tore the veil from their corrupt hearts and showed them in their true character. Pointing to them, his eye flashing with the terror of the divine law, and his voice as solemn as the knell of eternal destiny, he exclaimed, "Ye serpents, ye vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?"

It is admitted that no minister of the gospel can equal Christ in matter or manner, but still he is the true pattern, and all should strive to imitate him. Ministers should possess, in their measure, every trait of character which he exhibited, it takes them all to fill out the qualifications of a minister in kind ; and they will prove successful, in proportion as they fill the measure of each trait in degree. The more we are like Christ, the more good shall we do in the world.

A SUBJECT OF THOUGHT.

If an hour comes not appropriated, if an hour hangs heavily upon thee, ponder over the lost condition of mankind, and reflect what there is that remains for thee to do that they may be saved. and thou wilt be relieved from the burden of unoccupied time.

EXPOSITION.

"Answer not a fool according to his folly, lest thou also be like unto him. Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own conceit."—
 PROV. XXVI. 4, 5.

The fool is one who does not make a proper use of his reason.

When he speaks in the folly of passion, answer him not with like folly, but give a soft answer, which turneth away wrath.

Answer not the folly of mere talkativeness with similar folly. Perpetual prating about nothing may often be put down by a dead silence.

Answer not the folly of unreasonableness, false argument, or prejudice, by like folly, but "prove all things, and hold fast to that which is good."

Answer not the folly of profaneness by folly like his own, but by marked silence, or well-timed reproof.

Answer not the folly of malignity with like folly. "There is that which speaketh like the piercing of a sword, but the tongue of the wise is as a healing medicine. In the mouth of the foolish there is a rod of pride, but the lips of the wise shall preserve them."

Answer not the folly of peevishness according to its folly, but pity, forbear and forgive.

Answer not the folly of captiousness with similar folly. Be not displeased when you are contradicted; above all, do not wait for an opportunity of contradicting in your turn, to pay off the supposed affront.

Answer not the folly of flattery according to itself, but turn to it a deaf ear, and a disgusted heart; for he that flattereth his neighbor, spreadeth a net for his feet. Flattery cherishes pride, self-love, and self-ignorance.

But answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own conceit; that is, answer him so as to refute him on his own false principles, lest his being left without an answer should lead him to suppose that his folly is unanswerable, and so confirm him in his mistake. Answer him, if he fancies himself right when he is clearly in the wrong, if possible to prevent him from deluding others.—*Family Book*. [London.]

UNDERSTAND YOUR SUBJECT.

Never undertake to explain a text to the people, until you are satisfied you understand its meaning yourself. Never advance an argument in support of a proposition, or doctrine, or duty, which is not conclusive to your own mind. Clearness of conception of a truth or subject, will give clearness of expression. A subject can be presented only as the mind of the preacher conceives it ; if that conception be obscure and misty, he will send it forth veiled in misty words and cloudy paragraphs. Clear conceptions of truth will give clear exhibitions, and an unwavering belief in what is uttered, will give a tone and energy which will carry conviction to the hearts of the hearers. A distinguished minister asked a man of the stage, "Why is it that you move the passions of men with mere fiction, so much more than we do with solemn truth?" The reply was, "Because we utter fiction as though it were truth, while you utter truth as though it were fiction." Here is revealed much of the secret of power.

THE MATTER OF PREACHING.

Put Christ in every sermon. Christ cannot be made equally prominent in every sermon, but he should not be wholly omitted in any. He should be seen in the introduction, or fill up the body, or shine out in the conclusion. A sermon without Christ may teach good morals, but it is not gospel. But Christ is not in the text, and would you have me preach what is not in my text? If Christ is not in your text, neither by affirmation nor implication, drop that text and select one that has Christ in it, when you intend to preach a gospel sermon.

READING.

Paul said, "give attention to reading." When you read, be sure you comprehend the page you are on, before you turn the leaf over. One book well understood is better than many merely run through. If you can purchase but one book in a year, be sure that it be the best in the market, and that it be well read.

